

## PREFACE

In a bid to standardise higher education in the country, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has introduced Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) based on five types of courses viz. *core, discipline specific, generic elective, ability and skill enhancement* for graduate students of all programmes at Honours level. This brings in the semester pattern, which finds efficacy in sync with credit system, credit transfer, comprehensive continuous assessments and a graded pattern of evaluation. The objective is to offer learners ample flexibility to choose from a wide gamut of courses, as also to provide them lateral mobility between various educational institutions in the country where they can carry acquired credits. I am happy to note that the University has been accredited by NAAC with grade 'A'.

UGC (Open and Distance Learning Programmes and Online Learning Programmes) Regulations, 2020 have mandated compliance with CBCS for U.G. programmes for all the HEIs in this mode. Welcoming this paradigm shift in higher education, Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) has resolved to adopt CBCS from the academic session 2021-22 at the Under Graduate Degree Programme level. The present syllabus, framed in the spirit of syllabi recommended by UGC, lays due stress on all aspects envisaged in the curricular framework of the apex body on higher education. It will be imparted to learners over the *six* semesters of the Programme.

Self Learning Materials (SLMs) are the mainstay of Student Support Services (SSS) of an Open University. From a logistic point of view, NSOU has embarked upon CBCS presently with SLMs in English / Bengali. Eventually, the English version SLMs will be translated into Bengali too, for the benefit of learners. As always, all of our teaching faculties contributed in this process. In addition to this we have also requisitioned the services of best academics in each domain in preparation of the new SLMs. I am sure they will be of commendable academic support. We look forward to proactive feedback from all stakeholders who will participate in the teaching-learning based on these study materials. It has been a very challenging task well executed, and I congratulate all concerned in the preparation of these SLMs.

I wish the venture a grand success.

**Professor (Dr.) Subha Sankar Sarkar**  
Vice-Chancellor

**Netaji Subhas Open University**

**Under Graduate Degree Programme**

**Choice Based Credit System (CBCS)**

**Subject: Honours in Political Science (Hons.)**

**Programme Code : HPS**

**Course Code : CC - PS - 01**

**Course Title: Introducing Political Theory**

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**Course Code : CC-PS-01**  
**Course Title: Introducing Political Theory**  
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**Netaji Subhas  
Open University**

**UG : Political Science  
(HPS)**

**Course Title: Introducing Political Theory**

**Course Code : CC-PS-01**

### **Module - 1**

Unit-1	❑ What is Politics: Theorising the Political	9-17
Unit-2	❑ Traditions of Political Theory : Liberal Theory	18-30
Unit-3	❑ Marxist Theory	31-44
Unit-4	❑ Anarchist Theory	45-53
Unit-5	❑ Conservitive Theory	54-64

### **Module - 2**

Unit-6	❑ Approaches to Political Theory	67-82
Unit-7	❑ Empirical Approach to Political Theory	83-93
Unit-8	❑ Feminist Perspective in Political Theory	94-106
Unit-9	❑ Postmodern Perspective in Political Theory	107-123
Unit-10	❑ Postcolonial Perspective in Political Theory	124-146

### **Module - 3**

Unit-11	❑ Democracy : The History of an Idea	149-160
Unit-12	❑ Debates on Democracy	161-171

Unit-13	❑ Forms of Democracy	172-185
Unit-14	❑ Procedural Democracy: Critique of Procedural Democracy	186-194
Unit-15	❑ Deliberative Democracy : Concept, Characteristics and Forms	195-206

## **Module - 4**

Unit-16	❑ Models of Democracy	209-231
Unit-17	❑ Political Participation	232-250
Unit-18	❑ Representation : Meaning, Theories and Models	251-261
Unit-19	❑ Functional Representation	262-275
Unit-20	❑ Territorial Representation	276-290

# **MODULE - 1**





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# **Unit - 1 □ What is Politics : Theorising the Political**

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## **Structure**

- 1.0 Objective**
- 1.1 Introduction**
- 1.2 Nature and definition of politics**
- 1.3 Political Theory: Definition and features**
- 1.4 Decline of Political Theory**
- 1.5 Need for political theory**
- 1.6 Summing Up**
- 1.7 Probable Questions**
- 1.8 Further Reading**

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## **1.0 Objective**

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The main objectives of this unit are to understand the meaning of politics and political theory. After studying this unit students will be familiar with

- Defining features of politics as an activity.
- How politics has been understood by different thinkers and traditions.
- Meaning and features of political theory
- Importance and functions of Political theory.

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## **1.1 Introduction**

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The concept of politics originates with the classical Greek Philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle for whom politics is concerned with the general issues affecting the whole community.

Politics in the Greek world enveloped the whole life of the individual. Politics is a social activity through which human beings attempt to create a well organised and peaceful society. It exists due to the broad spectrum of ideas, and opinions within any society. It is always a dialogue. Theory is a tool for analysing politics. It is an

analytical device that helps to advance our understanding of the political world. It simultaneously performs both explanatory and normative functions.

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## **1.2 Nature and definition of politics**

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In everyday language politics is a loaded concept. Negative images have always been associated with it. In popular parlance politics is closely associated with the behaviour and activities of the politicians who are generally considered as selfish power seekers who hide their narrow self interests behind the veil of public interests and ideological convictions. Media exposure of the corrupt activities and practices of the politicians gives credence to the public perception. This has resulted in growing disillusionment with formal and established political processes. This phenomenon is known as anti-politics, which is rooted in a view of politics as a self-serving unprincipled activity. In this view politics is a dirty word, associated with trouble, disruption, violence, deceit, manipulation and lies. Such negative images need to be dispelled to establish that politics is a valuable activity.

Another major difficulty in arriving at a definition of politics is that in the academic study of the subject political scientists have defined the concept in different ways. The concept has been defined as the exercise of power, the exercise of authority, making of collective decisions, authoritative allocation of values, as the art of government, the practice of deception and manipulation and so on. Thus, in the academic world it is essentially a contested concept. There exists deep intellectual and ideological disagreements among political scientists. Andrew Heywood has identified four different views of politics in the academic study of the subject.

First view defines politics as an art of managing government and administration. This is the traditional view of politics which originated from the meaning of the term in ancient Greece. The word politics has been derived from the Greek word 'Polis', meaning the state or community as a whole. In this light, politics refers to the affairs of the state. The traditional view of politics is reflected in the tendency for academic study with its focus on the machinery of government and administration. American Political Scientist David Easton however, defines politics as the authoritative allocation of values. In his view, politics refers to the whole processes through which government responds to the societal demands by allocating values authoritatively.

This is a restrictive view of politics. From this perspective politics takes place in cabinet forum, legislative chamber, government agencies, administrative

organisations and the like and only a limited number of people engage themselves in politics. Thus most people, institutions and their activities remain outside the domain of politics. Different associations connected with trade and business, sports, education and other areas of social life are, in this sense, non political. In a more restricted view, politics is equivalent of party politics. Needless to say that the negative image of politics largely originates from this attempt to link politics largely exclusively to the affairs of the state.

The second view associates politics with public affairs. This view is based on the division between public and private sphere, which largely conforms to the distinction between state and society. State institutions which include government apparatus, court, army, police and so on belong to the public sphere because they are responsible for organization and management of social life. Civil society institutions like family, church, business organizations trade unions, clubs etc. are private in the sense that they are established by the individuals to satisfy their own specific interests. Accordingly, politics is restricted to the activities in the public sphere. The areas of life which individuals can manage for themselves are defined as non-political.

Over a period of time particularly with the advent of modernity a subtle distinction is made between personal and the political. In this view personal affairs must be kept separate from politics. Feminist thinkers argue that this is simply an attempt to deny that politics does occur in family life and personal relationships. They insist that politics is an activity that takes place within all social groups and is not confined to the public sphere.

Politics, in the third view, is the process of resolving conflict through compromise, conciliation and negotiation. Politics is the art of the possible. This view is well reflected in the description of problems like ethnic conflict as political, which requires political solution. Bernard Crick, one of the leading modern exponents of this view, defines politics as the activity through which diverse interests within a given community are reconciled. In this view politics exists due to the broad spectrum of ideas and opinions within any society. To resolve conflicting views and interests, all affected parties must arrive at a consensus through debate and discussion. Accordingly politics is the process of civilizing the barbarous conflict situation arising out of diverse views and interests.

The fourth view relates politics to power structured relationships which operate at every level of human existence. From this perspective politics is universal,

occurring in every social groups, institutions and societies, large or small. It is argued that politics is at the heart of all collective social activity.

The ubiquity of politics is explained by the inevitable presence of conflict in society. Scarcity of resources and diversity of views and interests make conflict an ever present reality. Thus, politics is, in essence, power, the ability to achieve desired values even at the cost of others. In Harold Lasswell's view, the essence of politics is: Who gets What, When and How?

Feminists and Marxists look at conflict differently. Feminists argue that traditional view of politics is exclusionary in nature keeping women outside the public domain. Women are traditionally confined to family. Radical feminists vehemently oppose the idea that politics stops at the front door, emphasizing rather that 'Personal is the Political'. Politics of everyday life is a major concern of the radical feminists.

For the Marxists, the heart of politics is conflict. They argue that the roots of social structure lie in the social relations emanating from the system of production. This is called class relations and the conflict inherent in class relations is called class conflict. Politics is the expression of this conflict in different forms and ways.

Both feminists and Marxists share the view that politics is all about domination and subjection. Feminists draw attention to the totality of oppression and subjection to which women are subject. Marxists argue that in a class divided society politics is characterised by the domination of the ruling class and the struggle of the subject classes to overthrow that domination. Both Marxists and feminists view politics as a means to challenge domination and subjection.

It is now abundantly clear from the above discussion that politics is not all about violence, disruption deceit and lie. The negative image of politics is largely a result of the behaviour and activities of the power hungry politicians. Politics, in effect, is a valuable activity and a civilizing force.

Politics begins with human purpose. Men form groups to realize their purposes. Politics occurs in and among human groups organized for action. Solitary individuals cannot engage in politics. In any human group members agree on some issues but disagree on others. Perfect unity and harmony in any group is rare. Politics, according to Aristotle, is a master science. For him, politics is an activity through which human beings attempt to realize their potential and create an ideal society.

Conflict lies at the heart of politics. It may be argued that politics is at once the condition, the process and the result of the resolution of conflict. Diversity of views

and interests and scarcity of resources make conflict inevitable. Political world is predicated upon the inescapable presence of conflict in society. Politics, at the same time, is also the process through which allocation of limited resources is attempted and adjustments of diverse needs and interests temporarily achieved. Without this process society would be reduced to a permanent state of anarchy. It must be emphasized, however, that politics cannot eliminate conflict. It is only the process through which resolution of conflict is attempted. Finally, politics is also the result of the resolution of conflict. This is because desired values are always scarce and resolution of conflict in such conditions means at best only temporary adjustment. As a result resolution of conflict at one point in time creates the conditions for conflict. It is for this reason that politics is often described as a process of conflict management of that resolution. Thus, we may define politics as a social process characterised by activities involving competition and cooperation in the exercise of power, resulting in the making of decisions for a group.

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### **1.3 Political Theory : Definition and Features**

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Attempts to construct political theory can be traced back to ancient Greece. Plato and Aristotle, in the context of the crisis of the Greek city state, sought to identify the reasons behind the crisis and prescribe ways for constructing an ideal state. In Greek thought, theory was associated with observation. Theory was the intermediary between the event and the observer. For Aristotle, theory denoted intellectual observation and contemplation in accordance with wisdom.

Theory is expression of systematic reflection and explanation of a chosen phenomena. Political theory attempts to arrive at generalizations and draws conclusions from the data relating to political phenomena. The term political theory has been defined in both a broad and a narrow sense. According to G. H. Sabine, political theory, in a broad sense, is anything about politics or relevant to politics. In its narrow sense, Sabine defines political theory "as the disciplined investigation of political problems".

David Held defines political theory as a network of concepts and generalizations about political life involving ideas, assumptions and statements about the nature, purpose and key features of government, state and society and about political capabilities of human beings. Political theory is not only concerned with the empirical study of the political phenomena but also prescribing the goals which

states, governments, societies and citizens ought to pursue. Thus, political theory is neither pure thought nor philosophy, nor science. While it draws heavily from all of them, yet it is distinct from them.

Rajeev Bhargava identifies six distinctive features of political theory. First feature is its concern with internal structure of concepts and their interrelations. In order to make sense of the political world, we impose meaning upon it and this we do through construction of concepts.

Second, a theory has a rational structure. There is a chain of reasons which is implicit in a theoretical work.

Third, theory is committed to find out truth objectively. However, the truth that theories search for are limited to specific time and place.

Fourth, theory seeks to identify the underlying assumptions of our specific beliefs actions and practices.

Fifth feature of a theory is some degree of generality. It seeks to cover a variety of related but disparate phenomena.

Sixth, theory must not be purely speculative. A theory must be rooted in the lived experience of the people and transcend it.

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## **1.4 Decline of Political Theory**

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In the 1950s many political scientists claimed that political theory was on the decline. David Easton in his essay "The decline of Modern Political Theory" raised this issue. According to him, it is primarily because of the attitude of the contemporary political scientists, who are satisfied with century old ideas and has failed to develop new political synthesis. He observed that modern political scientists have been guided by historical approach ignoring contemporary social problems and made no attempt to find their solution. According to him hyperfactualism has been dominating political science for a long time. New techniques of data collection have been adopted without any theoretical orientation. Comprehensive view of politics is conspicuous by its absence.

Echoing Easton's view Alfred Cobban observed that there was something definitely wrong with present day thinking about politics. Contemporary political

writings are characterised by lack of purpose. He attributed this to the influence of historical approach and scientific attitude of the modern political scientists.

During the 1950s many political scientists shared the view that political theory has lost its importance. They blamed historicism and increasing influence of logical positivism for the decline of political theory. Peter Laslett, in 1956, observed that the tradition of political theory is almost extinct and political philosophy is now dead.

The above view associated with positivism, is now widely believed to be mistaken. Behavioural political scientists sought to strengthen scientific basis of the study of politics by delinking it from normative issues. However, from the 1960s onwards it became increasingly clear that political theory cannot grow along with positivism which abstains from a critical examination of any social situation. Political theory addresses questions relating to the structure and functioning of the society in which we live. Our knowledge of the political world is built up through developing and refining concepts that help us make sense of the human world. Most of these concepts carry a normative import. Thus, every aspect of the human world is subject to normative assessment.

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## **1.5 Need for Political Theory**

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We need political theory to make political life intelligible. Theories do not originate in a vacuum. It originates from practice, reflects on the political realm and prescribes ways to transcend the current situation. According to Rajeev Bhargava, we need political theory because it performs certain key functions.

First is the interpretative and explanatory function. The human world does not exist independently of the concept we have constructed. To understand and explain the human world we must have a clear grasp of the complicated structure of the concepts that partly constitute it. It is theory which helps us in this respect.

Second is the contemplative role of political theory. Large social formations, historical changes, nature of modernity and problems associated with it cannot be fully understood by empirical enquiry. Some degree of speculation is needed. Political theory fulfills this purpose.

Third is the evaluative role. All human actions are subject to evaluation in the light of ethical considerations. Political theory brings out the normative import of concepts embedded in political practices and subjects them to critical reasoning.

Fourth, political theory is a form of thought. It is a systematic enquiry into the self. It provides answers to the questions regarding our identity and corresponding role.

David Held in his book *Political Theory Today* writes that political theory has three distinct tasks:

**(i) Philosophical :** It is concerned with the conceptual and normative world. It involves an account of how things should be with some kind of acknowledgement that this is not how things are.

**(ii) Empirical-analytical tasks :** Theory is concerned with the problem of understanding and explanation of the political world.

**(iii) Strategic :** Theory gives an account of the feasibility of moving from where we are to where we might like to be.

All these functions of the political theory are crucial in the contemporary world. In the present circumstances with its multitude of problems and uncertainties we need sound political theory to give us a sense of direction and a feeling of purpose.

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## 1.6 Summing Up

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- Politics is the sum total of all those activities and processes through which a society makes its own history and faces the historical challenges. It is a process of conflict and cooperation among individuals and groups whose purpose is to secure values like liberty, equality, property etc. It is linked to the diversity and conflict.
- Thinkers belonging to different political traditions have understood politics differently. Politics has been defined as the art of government and administration, as management of public affairs, as resolution of conflict or conflict management.
- Traditional view restricts politics to personnel and machinery of government. However, when politics is defined as power, it is present in all social activities and in every corner of human existence.
- Theory is a tool of political analysis. Political theory seeks to understand, explain and analyse the political phenomena and prescribe ways and means to rectify the shortcomings. Since the ancient Greece political theory is a form of thought with a direct practical orientation. It is concerned with logical coherence, rigour in argument, empirical accuracy, moral seriousness and practical efficacy. All these attributes are crucial in modern complex societies.



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## 1.7 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Explain how politics has been understood by different thinkers belonging to different political traditions.
2. Examine the basic features of political theory.
3. Do you think that political theory is on the decline? Argue your case.

### Long Questions :

1. In what sense politics is a loaded as well as a contested concept.
2. Why is conflict regarded as the heart of politics?
3. Discuss the nature and meaning of politics.

### Short Questions :

1. Define political theory.
2. Examine the need and importance of political theory.

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## 1.8 Further Reading

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## **Unit 2 □ Traditions of Political Theory : Liberal Theory**

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### **Structure**

#### **2.0 Objective**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

#### **2.2 Origin**

#### **2.3 Definition**

#### **2.4 Different strands of Liberalism : Classical**

#### **2.5 Modern Liberalism**

#### **2.6 Neo Liberalism**

#### **2.7 Egalitarian Liberalism**

#### **2.8 critique of Liberalism**

#### **2.9 Summing Up**

#### **2.10 Probable Questions**

#### **2.11 Further Reading**

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### **2.0 Objective**

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The unit deals with the Liberal Tradition. After going through this unit students will

- Know the meaning of liberalism and its defining features.
- Be able to identify different versions of the liberal tradition.
- Be able identify the impact of liberal tradition on political theory and practice.

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### **2.1 Introduction**

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All theories contain implicit assumptions. They bear the imprint of values and normative beliefs. The major theories of politics address the issues of power and the role of the state. At a deeper level they reflect the assumptions and beliefs of one or

other major ideological traditions. Political and social enquiry is a battleground of competing traditions: Liberalism, Marxism, Conservatism, Anarchism and so on. Each presents its own account of social existence and a particular view of the world.

As a theoretical tradition liberalism emerged in the 17th century. Renaissance, Enlightenment together with Reformation created the environment for the growth of liberal ideas. Liberalism developed initially as a protest against feudal authority and privileges and absolute monarchy, claimed to be based on the doctrine of the 'divine right of kings. As a theory of modernity, it was an expression of the economic, social and political aspirations of the rising middle classes. Liberal protest centered around the demand for liberty of the individual in every sphere of life. Liberalism at this stage was revolutionary, fighting against irrationalism, superstition, intolerance and arbitrariness.

The distinctive features which marked the liberal tradition at its inception were altered and reshaped by the historical developments since the 19th century. Liberalism which was radical at its inception became increasingly conservative in the face of challenges of other political traditions and movements such as Socialism, Marxism and Fascism. It absorbed democracy and socialism to a great extent in the form of the welfare state. With the fall of Soviet Union and disintegration of the socialist block liberalism has become dominant political tradition of the contemporary world. However, various political developments since the last decade of the 20th century, notably growing moral and cultural diversity in the Western countries and North America, rise of varieties of fundamentalisms, rise of identity politics have led many liberals to cast doubt about the applicability of liberal principles to all people and all societies.

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## **2.2 Origin**

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Liberalism as a theoretical tradition established itself in the 19th century. But its origin as a way of thinking about man and society may be traced back to diverse sources and social experience that gradually merged to form a strong political current. Ancient Greek tradition of freedom of enquiry and comparative religious toleration, sophists and sceptical thinkers' assertion of the universal equality of men and the doctrine of political equality, individualistic legal tradition of Rome, and the Universalist and individualistic outlook of the christianity—all these significantly contributed to the formation of the liberal tradition.

In political theory the rise of liberalism is identified with the development of

individualism. Seventeenth century natural rights theories emphasized voluntarism and inviolability of individual rights. The idea of social contract expressed an individualist philosophy that allowed free choice and personal expression. In the American War of Independence and the French Revolution liberalism was clearly accompanied by a commitment to social equality, indicating that all individuals are equal in relation to one another and deserve no special privilege because of their class or heritage. Liberalism thus, became a theory with a focus on the emancipation of the individual. In theory it subordinated the state and political institutions to individual will, by identifying the former as human creation.

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## **2.3 Definition**

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Liberalism is a dynamic and flexible concept. It has shown tremendous capacity of survival and adaptability. However, it is difficult to provide a precise and uncontroversial definition of liberalism. It has undergone many changes in the course of its evolution and it necessitates a historical rather than static type of analysis.

Liberalism refers to a cluster of social, political and economic doctrines which have changed overtime, For Laski, liberalism implies a passion for liberty. It was an attempt to give back to man his individuality. It was this postulate that was expressed in Kant's statement that morality consists in treating persons as ends and not as means. As an attitude, liberalism lays stress on man's goodness and rationality and seeks reforms in every sphere of life for a better future.

Liberalism has a rich historical story with contrasting formations. It has acquired different forms in different national cultures. John Gray in his persuasive analysis argues that liberalism has no single static essence. But it has a set of distinctive conception of man and society which differentiates it from other political traditions. This has undergone alteration and modification in the process of evolution of liberalism. But the core elements of the liberal concept of man and society did not change. These elements are:

Liberalism is individualist in asserting the moral primacy of individual against the claims of any social group. It is egalitarian in acknowledging same moral status of all individuals. It is universalist in claiming the moral unity of the human species. It is meliorist in asserting that all social and political institutions and arrangements are improvable. John Gray claims that in spite of all the rich historical diversity, liberalism is a single phenomenon by virtue of the four elements that constitute the

liberal conception of man and society. Despite all controversies and contrasting formations liberalism remains an integral outlook whose core elements are not hard to specify.

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## **2.4 Different Strands of Liberalism : Classical**

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Several crises of modernity and emergence of rival theoretical traditions made reinterpretation of liberal principles inevitable. This led to the rise of several versions of the liberal tradition: Classical, Modern, Neo-liberal and Egalitarian liberalism.

### **Classical Liberalism**

Classical liberalism emerged in an atmosphere characterized by changes in all areas of social life. Renaissance, reformation and enlightenment created an atmosphere favouring autonomy of the individual, his liberty and rationality. Industrial revolution and consequent emergence of a new social class, which was later called bourgeoisie, emergence of the nation state, growing influence of secular ideas led to the rise of classical liberalism. This new philosophy found expression in the writings of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Adam Smith, Malthus, Ricardo, James Mill, Bentham, John Stuart Mill among others.

Classical liberalism emerged as a protest against the arbitrary power of the kings and privileges of the nobility based on birth. Opposing the tradition of man's fixed station in life it supported an open society where every individual could attain respectability and success based on his merit. It believed in a competitive society and free market economy. It supported free thinking and rationalism. The idea of change, growth, dynamism, competition and mobility occupied central place in classical liberal theory.

The distinctive feature of classical liberalism is its commitment to an extreme form of individualism. Human beings are described as selfish and egoistical but at the same time rational. In C.B Macpherson's analysis this form of individualism is identified as possessive individualism, where individuals are owner of their own persons and capacities, owing nothing to society or to one another. Society is composed of atom like autonomous individual.

Individual liberty constitute the core of classical liberalism. Classical liberals believed in negative liberty, meaning non interference or absence of restraints upon individual. It is liberty both from the state and society. The individual is free in so far as he or she is not interfered with or coerced by others.

Classical liberals saw the state in purely negative terms. State is not a natural institution, but an artificial institution created by man. The state originates by mutual consent for the sole purpose of preserving and protecting rights of the individual. The relationship between the state and the individual is contractual. Individuals have every right to revolt and establish a new government in the event of violation of the terms of the contract. The state is viewed as a necessary evil. It is necessary in the sense that it establishes order and security. At the same time it is an evil in the sense that it imposes a collective will upon society and thereby limiting the freedom of the individual. Classical liberals supported the establishment of a minimal or night watchman state. In classical liberal theory rights are prior to the state. Locke advocated a theory of natural rights of life, liberty and property for the protection of which state was constituted.

In the economic sphere classical liberals had deep faith in the mechanism of the free market. They believed that economy works best when left alone by government. Laissez faire capitalism would guarantee prosperity and uphold individual liberty. The market is a self-regulating mechanism. It is managed by what Adam Smith referred to as an invisible hand.

One salient feature of classical liberalism is its explanation of poverty and social inequality in terms of human talents and their hard work. Men with competence and willingness to work will prosper and the incompetent or the lazy will perish. Herbert Spencer expressed these ideas boldly in his book *The Man versus the State*. Spencer developed a strong defence of the doctrine of laissez-faire drawing upon Charles Darwin's theory of 'natural selection'. According to him, a process of natural selection operates within human society, which is characterized by the principle of the 'survival of the fittest'. Inequalities of wealth, position and power are natural and government should not interfere with them. Thus individual liberty, limited state, free contract, competition, free market economy were the hallmarks of classical liberal theory.

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## **2.5 Modern Liberalism**

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The success of capitalism in the 19th century witnessed rapid concentration of wealth in a few hands which created many social, economic and political contradictions. The free market economy created massive inequalities among people and subjected the vulnerable sections of the society to greater exploitation and oppression. With the enormous growth of the labour force in the industrial cities, freedom of contract

virtually meant freedom of the factory owner to hire and fire workers to maximise their profit. Free market economy virtually resulted in inhuman conditions for the workers, child labour and slum dwellers. When free market was interpreted as total absence of government regulation, it brought disastrous consequences for the bulk of the society instead of greatest happiness of the greatest number held so dearly by the utilitarians. In England, the Royal Commission, appointed to investigate the coal mining industry, in its report brought to light the brutality that existed in the mines, employment of women and children long hours of barbarous work, absence of safety devices. Classical liberalism came in for sharp criticism from different quarters. The humanists criticized it for its practical outcome such as poverty, unemployment, ignorance and disease. The socialists were pressing for urgent solution of problems affecting the working class. The liberals were forced to realize that liberal principles need to be revised in the changed social and historical context.

In the changed social and historical context old notions such as self-interest, pleasure and utility proved unconvincing. The situation called for re-examination of the nature and function of liberty, the relationship between liberty and authority and the relationship between individual and society. The revision was carried out by J.S. Mill, T. H. Green, Hobhouse, G.D.H. Cole, Barker, Laski among others.

Modern liberals were profoundly influenced by German idealism, particularly by the ideas of Emmanuel Kant and Hegel. This was evident in the shift away from individualism toward exploring some kind of collectivist concept. Modern liberals acknowledged the institutional nature of society and historical evolution of institutions.

Liberty occupies a prime position in modern liberalism. John Stuart Mill in his book "On Liberty" presented solid arguments in favour of individual liberty. According to him, individual is sovereign over his body and mind. Liberty is explained as the absence of restrictions upon individual's selfregarding actions. This is essentially negative concept of freedom. At the same time Mill saw liberty as a positive and constructive force. The value of liberty, for Mill, is that it enables individuals to develop, to acquire talents, skills and knowledge and to refine their sensibilities.

Central to John Stuart Mill's exploration of liberty was the move from individualism to individuality. Mill focussed on human growth and on exercising mental and moral faculties of the individual. According to him, the value of personality can be realized in the actual conditions of a free society. Liberty is a good in itself. To live one's own life, developing one's own talents and capacities, is not only a means to happiness, but a substantive part of happiness itself. For him liberty

is not only an individual but also a social good. In a free society the function of a liberal state is to act as a means of creating, increasing and equalising opportunity.

T. H. Green sought to place liberalism on broad foundations. He argued that at the centre of liberal philosophy was the idea of general good, to be shared by everyone and which provided a standard for legislation. In his interpretation, choice means opportunity and opportunity means a society that is not coercive beyond need in its legal, political, economic and social structure.

Liberty, for Green, is really a social as much as it is an individual conception. It refers to a quality of society and also quality of the persons who compose it. A government cannot remain liberal by standing aside and refraining from legislation. A liberal government must support the existence of a free society and remove obstacles in the way of moral development of the individual.

Although this undoubtedly modified classical liberal theory, it did not amount to the rejection of core liberal ideas. Modern liberalism while appropriating some of the socialist principles did not place society before the individual. It developed a positive view of freedom. Freedom implies the ability of the individual to gain fulfilment and achieve self-realization. The night watchman state of classical liberal theory was quite incapable of creating condition for the development of individuality. L. T. Hobhouse and J. A. Hobson developed a radical organic view of society in which the health of the whole was dependent on the health of each and every part.

These ideas provided the basis for the emergence of the welfare state in the 20th century. Influenced by the German philosopher Hegel who described the state as an ethical institution, modern liberals put emphasis on social responsibility of the state. State, for them, is the guarantor of liberty. Social welfare activities of the state will create equality of opportunity. State has responsibility to protect the disadvantaged section of society and by doing so it broadens individual rights. Modern liberals believed that coordinated governmental activities could at least significantly ameliorate evils of industrial capitalism. The principle of laissez-faire was abandoned because of its failure to bring about general prosperity. The insightful argument of J. M. Keynes that growth and prosperity could be maintained only through a system of regulated capitalism became theoretical basis of interventionist state. Keynes argued that problems of unemployment and poverty cannot be solved by the invisible hand of the market. The primary goal of the modern liberals was to develop individual capabilities so that they can take responsibility for their own situation and make their own moral choices.



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## 2.6 Neo Liberalism

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In the 1970s the sharp deterioration in the performance of the western economy, the collapse of the Bretton Woods agreements for managing currencies, recession, the oil price shocks, the rise in working class militancy and growing inflation led to widespread questioning of Keynesian economic management. The crisis created the context for renewed interest in the theories of classical political economy. The shift away from Keynesian priorities and revival of free market doctrines went under the name neoliberalism. It reflected a reaction to the general trend towards an expanding state in the economy and society. However, it is not a unified and coherent theory. It includes diverse set of ideas and policies having many internal tensions. It has included many kinds of liberals and conservatives. Friedrich Von Hayek, Milton Friedman, James Buchanan, Robert Nozick, Ayn Rand and Murray Rothbard are chief proponents of neoliberal ideas.

Neoliberals believe that freedom is the fundamental value that must underlie all social relations. Personal liberty is the supreme moral good. Individual should be free from the interference of others. One's liberty can be restricted only if he consents to restriction. Liberty is not just another good like car. It is a necessary condition of action.

Opposition to the big government constitutes one fundamental element of neoliberalism. It is deeply suspicious of the state. The state is viewed in negative terms, as a source of restriction on individual freedom. To the neoliberals economic freedom is the most fundamental. Hayek argued that control over economic sphere ultimately leads to control over every sphere. According to Hayek, the adoption of welfare policies would bring totalitarian government in the long run. The tendency of the state to encroach on individual liberty has to be resisted continually. Rothbard argued that only safe course to protect liberty is to abolish the state altogether and rely on voluntary and private agreements.

However, all neoliberals do not subscribe to the view that there is no role for the state. Majority of them endorse a role for the state, but there is considerable disagreement over what functions the state should perform. Those who favour right based arguments tend to advocate a minimal state, whose functions are restricted to internal security, external defence, the rule of law, protection of property and enforcement of contract. Robert Nozick has provided a strong defence of the minimal state in these terms. According to him, the state will arise from anarchy. Individuals in the state of nature would find it in their interest to allow dominant protective

agency to emerge. The function of the state should be limited to the narrow functions of protection against force, theft, fraud, enforcement of contract and so on. Justifying the minimal state he categorically asserts that liberty must get absolute precedence over equality. He opposes policies of progressive taxation and any redistribution of property by the state because it may violate the liberty of those who have property.

Neoliberals claim that only economic order that respects individual freedom is free market.

Free market, to them is an example of freedom in action. The market is superior to other economic system, since it handles human ignorance by passing information in coded form through the price mechanism which indicates where profits could be made and resources efficiently used. Market delivers fairness and economic justice. It gives all people the opportunity to rise and fall on the basis of talent and hard work. Free market is the economic system of free individual and it is necessary to create wealth. Market process being non-coercive is more efficient than planning in producing harmony among men's economic activities. It is in this sense market may be considered as the basis of a spontaneous social order.

Neo-liberals support democracy, but consider it exclusively as means of choosing representatives and governments under condition of reasonable transparency and competition. At the same time they have certain reservations about democracy and want to restrict its scope as much as possible. They argue that democracy generates ideas and expectations which if acted upon can undermine the principles of a market order. Democratic concepts such as popular sovereignty and mandate indicate that will of the people should get priority over everything. But for neoliberals reality of the market is much more important than the will of the people. Politicians have a tendency to raise expectation during election, then lower them afterwards. This in turn leads to widespread disillusion and cynicism about politics. Hayek and other neoliberals propose reduction of scope of democracy as much as possible. Hayek advocates the idea of creating an institutional structure for democracy which limits the power of the mob and entrusts power to the informed and the judicious.

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## **2.7 Egalitarian Liberalism**

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Over the course of the last four decades there has emerged a distinctive brand of liberal political theory called egalitarian liberalism. It is primarily concerned with the issue of distributive justice, that is how the benefits and burdens of social cooperation

are to be distributed. Egalitarian liberals believe that liberty and equality are compatible political values and that the demands of these two values should be taken seriously when considering what the just division of burdens and benefits are.

John Rawls in his major works, *A Theory of Justice*, and *Political Liberalism* has contributed to the elaboration of this perspective. His theory of justice may be explained as an attempt to combine liberal democracy, the market economy and the redistributive welfare state. He is critical of utilitarianism which employs net aggregate satisfactions to assess the fairness of public policy and institutions drawing upon the moral theory of institutions. Drawing upon the moral theory of Immanuel Kant, Rawls argues that a just order should be based on the principle of the priority of right over the good.

This version of liberalism is generally conceived as a particular form of ethical theory. It seeks to give priority to the interests of individuals as autonomous, rational and purposive agents. The egalitarian liberalism of John Rawls appears to be a device to create universal ground rules for society that permit a fair and equal opportunity for all in the context of a political order based on impartiality, relative inclusiveness and distribution of goods and services that works for the benefit of all and especially the least well off.

For Rawls, a fundamental fact of our world is a pluralism of conceptions of the good. Many conflicting doctrines cannot all be true, but all may be reasonable. According to Rawls, liberalism is a reasonable response to the reasonable plurality of beliefs. This is political liberalism. It can operate as an 'overlapping consensus', shared by men loyal to comprehensive philosophies otherwise conflicting.

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## **2.8 Critique of Liberalism**

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Like any other theoretical tradition liberalism has had its critics. It has been denounced, rejected, revised and defended by leading writers. Thus, Laski while criticising liberalism for upholding the values of the bourgeoisie, laid emphasis on the liberal virtues of freedom and tolerance.

Conservatives rejected liberalism's initial emphasis on liberation. They argued that liberalism's emphasis on the individual and his or her creative talents unsettled established order. Liberal theory is criticised for being blind to sources of power other than those found in the state. In the postwar period it is denounced for being too close to neo-colonialism.

Marxists lay emphasis on the hidden dangers of liberalism. For them, liberalism delivers the exact opposite of what it claims to seek. Liberalism presents itself as a theory of freedom but is in fact one of coercion and exploitation. It pretends to be a theory of inclusion when it in fact excludes. It is claimed to be a theory of equality, when in fact it justifies established patterns of inequality. Marxists condemn liberalism for working as an ideological justification for a competitive, property owning, free market capitalism and ignoring the interests of those incapable of surviving in such an environment.

Critics argue that liberal ideas have been widely used for distinctly non liberal purposes in the actual history of developed democracies. Liberal languages have been employed intentionally to justify campaign for disenfranchisement, inequality in public service provision and racial segregation.

Communitarians criticize liberalism for propagating false conception of the self. Liberals suggest that self is 'unencumbered, detached and separate from social ends'. Liberalism, therefore, threatens to degenerate into unrestrained egoism and is incapable of promoting cooperation.

Feminists attack liberalism for its failure to recognise the significance of gender differences and propagating a conception of personhood that is dominated by male traits and characteristics.

Despite these criticisms it is difficult to underestimate the historical importance and contribution of liberalism. During the last four centuries it has given many humanistic and democratic ideas. Almost all the issues of modern western philosophy have been connected with liberalism. It has provided inspiration to a multitude of political programmes and movements. It has influenced the discourses of a large range of political traditions in smaller or larger degree, It has propagated a secular vision built around some of the most persistent challenges of social and political life.

In the twenty-first century liberalism is confronted with challenges from various sources. Growing ideological diversity, various forms of fundamentalism, resurgent nationalism based on ethnic purity, growing importance of multiple cultural identities have created a situation in which liberal tradition is suffering from a crisis of confidence. This is evident in the growing reluctance of liberals to present their ideas as universal. John Gray argues that in the post modern situation liberalism will have to renounce any claim to universal authority and learn to live peacefully with rival cultures and world views.

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## 2.9 Summing Up

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- Liberalism was the product of the breakdown of feudalism and the growth of a market society in its place. Right from its inception, it has been continuously changing, adding something and discarding others. It began as a protest movement against the hierarchical and privileged authority and absolute monarchy. The main slogan of the protest was liberty in every sphere of life.
- There are several strands of the liberal tradition: Classical, Modern, Neoliberal and Egalitarian.
- Classical liberalism believed in the autonomy of the individual will and the rationality and goodness of the individual. Classical liberals defined freedom as absence of restraints. They believed in the inalienable right of the individual. In classical liberal view, state is an artificial institution based upon social contract. It is a necessary evil. Its role is to maintain law and order, and leave the individual free.
- The development of industrial capitalism necessitated a thorough going revision of liberal theory. The revision was carried out by J. S. Mill, T. H. Green, L. T. Hobhouse, Hobson, Harold Laski, Barker among others. Modern liberals attempted to reconcile the interest of the individual with that of society so that the essentials of the capitalist system could be preserved while removing its ill effects. For the modern liberals state is an instrument of development of human personality through social reform and welfare measures. This involved abandoning the policy of laissez-faire and adopting the principle of the welfare state.
- In the last three decades of the 20th century there has been a sustained attempt to limit the role of the state in the economy and society and glorify the role of the market. It has brought into existence a new version of liberalism, called neoliberalism. It asserts the primacy of liberty. For the neoliberals market is the embodiment of freedom. They attempt to set up an unbreakable bond between freedom, the market and efficient pursuit of policies and programmes.
- Egalitarian liberalism associated with John Rawls is based on the belief that social inequality can be justified only if it is of benefit to the least advantaged. It is primarily concerned with the issue of distributive justice.

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## 2.10 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Discuss, the origin and development of liberalism as a distinct theoretical tradition.
2. Examine the distinctive features of classical liberalism.
3. Discuss the neoliberal theory of the nature and function of the state.

### Long Questions :

1. Trace the evolution of modern liberalism.
2. Examine the liberal approach to individual liberty.
3. Make a critical assessment of liberalism as a political tradition.

### Short Questions :

1. How would you define liberalism?
2. How is liberalism linked to capitalism?
3. Write a short note on egalitarian liberalism.

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## 2.11 Further Reading

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1. Gray, John. *Liberalism*, 2nd edn. (Milton Keynes : Open University, Press, 2000)
2. Heywood, Andrew, *Political Ideologies*. (Palgrave, Macmillan, 2003)
3. Freedon. M. Sargent, L. T. and Maresteas. (ed) *The Oxford Handbook of Political Idologies*. (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2013)
4. Bhargava, Rajeev and Acharya, Ashok, *Political Theory. An Introduction*. (Delh : Pearson, 2019)
5. Freedon, M. *Idologies and Political Theory*. (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1996)

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## **Unit 3 □ Marxist Theory**

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### **Structure**

#### **3.0 Objective**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

#### **3.2 What is Marxism?**

#### **3.3 Sources of Marxism**

#### **3.4 Basic Principles of Marxism**

##### **3.4.1 Dialectical Materialism**

##### **3.4.2 Historical Materialism**

##### **3.4.3 Class Struggle**

##### **3.4.4 Theory of surplus value**

##### **3.4.5 Revolution**

##### **3.4.6 Dictatorship of the Proletariat**

##### **3.4.7 Communism**

#### **3.5 Different Strands of Marxism**

##### **3.5.1 Orthodox Marxism**

##### **3.5.2 Western Marxism**

##### **3.5.3 Post Marxism**

#### **3.6 Critique of Marxism**

#### **3.7 Summing Up**

#### **3.8 Probable Questions**

#### **3.9 Further Reading**

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### **3.0 Objective**

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In this unit students will read theory of Marxism, propounded by Karl Marx and others. The basic principles of Marxism and different strands of Marxism are discussed at length. After reading this unit they will be familiar with:

- Sources of Marxism
- Basic Postulates of Marxism

- Different versions of the Marxist tradition
- Limitations and contemporary relevance of Marxism

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### **3.1 Introduction**

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Marxism constitutes one of the most lively and influential currents of modern thought. It has constituted the principal alternative to the liberal tradition. It is not a closed and completed system. It is an evolving tradition and has assumed a great variety of forms. It has developed by responding to intellectual challenges from critics as well as sympathisers and attempting to explain and understand changes in the social world.

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### **3.2 What is Marxism?**

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There is no simple answer to the question: What is Marxism? It has been defined differently; as a comprehensive world view, as a philosophical outlook, as an ideology of the proletariat, as a social movement, as a science of society and social change. Russian Marxist Plekhanov defined Marxism as a total world view. For him Marxism is an explanation of the world from the materialist perspective. According to Emile Burns, Marxism is a general theory of the world and of human society. For him, Marxism refers to the ideas which Marx together with Friedrich Engels developed during the middle and latter part of the 19th century.

However, Marxism is not simply an ideology or a philosophical world view. It is an aggregate of some definite theories which explain human society, its development and transformation. Lenin defined Marxism as the system of views and teaching of Marx.

Recent Marxist scholars like Althusser view Marxism as a science which seeks to uncover the truth lying behind the visible social world. It seeks to explain social life of man and its transformation scientifically.

However, Marxism does not mean exclusively the ideas of Marx. It includes ideas of Marx, Engels and their followers who call themselves Marxists. Marxism is constantly being developed keeping in view the changes occurring in the real world.

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### **3.3 Sources of Marxism**

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Marxism emerged as a distinct theoretical tradition in the mid 19th century. It is



a combination of all those best created by men in the world of science, knowledge and philosophy. According to Lenin, it is the lawful successor to the best that has been created by humanity in the 19th century– German Philosophy, English Political Economy and Utopian Socialism.

Late 18th and early 19th century was the golden age of philosophical thinking in Germany. During this period Kant and Hegel gave idealist philosophy an absolute form. Ancient philosophers considered truth as absolute. For them truth is one and the same in all ages. Rejecting this view Hegel argued that truth can never be absolute. Nothing is eternal and everything is in a state of flux. The driving force of change is the dialectic, a process of interaction between competing forces. Infact progress is the consequence of internal conflict. In Hegel's formulation this explains the movement of the world spirit towards self realization through conflict between a thesis, and its opposing force, an anti-thesis producing a synthesis, which in turn constitutes a new thesis. This process keeps on repeating itself and historical changes occur through this process.

In this dialectical movement of human history ideas are conceived to be principal causes of historical changes. Marx, according to Engels, turned Hegel on his head by investing Hegelian dialectic with a materialist interpretation. Dialectical changes are not due to ideas but material conditions. Ideas are the product of material conditions of society. Marx got this insight from Feuerbach's writings. Feuerbach was a staunch critic of Hegel's idealism. According to him nature exists independently of human consciousness. Man is a creation of nature. Nothing is real outside nature and religion also is not real. It is a creation of man's imagination. Alienated from himself man creates religion which ultimately controls his life.

In Feuerbach's materialism there was no role for consciousness in the process of man's interaction with the material world. His materialism was mechanical. Marx modified Feuerbach's formulation and made it the basis of his philosophical theory. Marx's materialism aimed to do more than interpret the world. It aimed to be intellectually adequate to the practical task of changing the world.

English political economy constitutes the second intellectual source of Marxism. Labour theory of value has been derived from the British Political conomists of the 18th and 19th centuries. According to this theory the value of every commodity is determind by the quantity of socially necessary labour spent in its production. According to Marx, British political economists had analysed relations between different commodities and for them value of a commodity simply expresses this relation. But in reality value of a commodity expreses relations between different

men. Exchange means exchange of labour and labour, under capitalist system is a commodity. Marx made a threadbare analysis of economic ideas of British Political economists and constructed his theory of surplus value on that basis.

French socialism constitutes the third intellectual source of Marxism. Socialist ideas emerged in France during French Revolution and immediately after it. Babeuf and his associates propagated theory of communist society. They wanted to establish revolutionary dictatorship of the working class. Saint Simon and his followers felt the need for tackling the problem of inequality in industrial capitalism. French socialists had fair understanding of the competitive character of capitalism. They raised the question of social transformation and suggested reorganization of society according to rational principles of production and distribution.

However, they could not indicate a real way out. They failed to explain the essence of wage slavery and discover the laws of social development. They could not identify the social force capable of becoming the creator of a new society.

However, Marx became familiar with socialist ideas in embryonic form from their writings. Saint Simon's concept of stateless society free from exploitation influenced him. Similarly, Fourier's analysis of division of labour in bourgeois society and Proudhon's economic analysis of private property earned his respect.

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## **3.4 Basic Principles of Marxism**

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The basic principles of Marxism are: dialectical materialism, historical materialism, class struggle, theory of surplus value, revolution, dictatorship of the proletariat and Communism.

### **3.4.1 Dialectical Materialism**

Dialectical materialism is the scientific methodology developed by Marx and Engels for the interpretation of human history. The word dialectic was used by the Greek philosophers to denote a method of discovering truth. German philosopher Hegel made scientific use of the term dialectic. For him, dialectic is the method by which human history is unfolded. Historical changes take place in a dialectical process. He developed the trilogy of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. Every stage of growth is characterized by contradictions. These contradictions induce further change, progress and development. Thesis is challenged by its anti-thesis. Both contain elements of truth and falsehood. The false elements constitute contradictions. The true elements of both the thesis and anti-thesis are fused together in a synthesis. The

evolved synthesis in course of time becomes a thesis and it is again challenged by its opposite, antithesis, which again results in a new synthesis. This process continues until the stage of perfection is reached.

According to Hegel, in this dialectical movement of human history ideas are conceived to be principal cause of historical process. Dialectical change in history takes place under the impact of ideas. In Marx's view, Hegel's dialectic was standing on its head and he put it on its feet. For Hegel, ultimately it is the idea which matters and other things are its reflection. Marx replaced idea with matter. According to him material forces constitute the base and idea is a part of the superstructure. The material forces determine the idea and not vice-versa. The fundamental laws of dialectical materialism are: (a) the law of the transformation of quantity into quality, according to which gradual quantitative changes; give rise to revolutionary qualitative changes. (b) the law of the unity of opposites, which holds that the unity of concrete reality is a unity of opposites or contradictions; and (c) the law of negation of the negation, which claims that in the clash of opposites one opposite negates another and is in turn negated by a higher level of historical development that preserves something of both negated terms.

### **3.4.2 Historical Materialism**

Historical materialism is the application of the principles of dialectical materialism to the study of human society. It constitutes the social scientific core of Marxist theory. Historical materialism starts from the view that in order to survive human beings collectively work on nature to produce the means to live. There is a division of labour in which people not only do different jobs, but some people live from the work of others by owning the means of production. Marx gave pride of place to the production of material life in the investigation of social structure and historical development. In his preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy Marx argues that economic structure of society, constituted by its relations of production, is the real foundation of society. It is the basis on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The economic structure of society contains social relations of production as well as forces of production. A mode of production is a relationship between forces of production and relations of production.

As the society's productive forces develop, they clash with existing relations of production. Capacity to produce expands but ownership of the means of production contracts, The result is maladjustment which is built in. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. The conflict is resolved in favour of the productive forces and new

relations of production emerge whose material precondition have matured in the womb of the old society.

Thus, different socio-economic organizations of production which have characterized human history arise or fall as they enable or hinder the expansion of society's productive capacity. It is to be noted that this is not technological determinism. Technology functions within a social context. Its ultimate source is human labour and inventiveness and what makes it important is the character of the production process.

For Marx the super structure is derived from the base. But in each social formation more specific laws govern the precise nature of the general derivation. Marx's theory does not view the superstructure as an epi-phenomenon of the economic base. It is because a superstructure is needed to organize and stabilize society that the economic base brings about those institutions that are best suited to it. In fact, one of the fundamental tenets of historical materialism is that superstructure affects or reacts back on the base.

Marx designates the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production as the major epochs in humanity's advance. However, these mark the general stages of socio-economic evolution-as a whole. These are not the steps which history obliges every nation without exception to climb. Marx did not attempt to indicate a series of successive stages through which all societies without exception must pass in sequence. He denied propounding any historico-philosophical theory of social development imposed by fate upon every people.

### **3.4.3 Class Struggle**

The theory of class struggle is a corollary of historical materialism. While historical materialism contains the theory of social change, theory of class struggle describes its mechanism. According to Marx, the history of all hitherto existing society has been history of class struggle. He wanted to prove that class struggle has been the permanent feature of human history. Except the primitive communist stage, all historical ages have been characterized by the antagonism between the dominant and dependent classes. It is the result of exploitation by the property owning class of the property-less class. The interests of the contending classes are irreconcilable. It is resolved through a social revolution. The inherent contradictions of contending classes of every epoch can be resolved only through the abolition of the exploiting classes.

### **3.4.4 Theory of Surplus Value**

Marx developed the theory of surplus value to explain the whole phenomenon of exploitation in the capitalist society. In simple term surplus value is what is normally called profit. The theory of surplus value is rooted in the labour theory of value. Value of a commodity is nothing but crystallized labour. Surplus value arises because some part of the worker's labour is not paid to him. The major share of profit is appropriated by the capitalists. Surplus value is the difference between market value of commodity and the wage paid to a labourer for creating this value. According to Marx, capital is the vampire that sucks the blood of the worker. With the growth of capitalism and the rise in competition, the wages of the workers continue to fall. Cut throat competition leads to deterioration of the lot of the proletariat. This intensifies class struggle and eventually leads to revolution.

### **3.4.5 Revolution**

According to Marx, social revolution takes place when the existing relation of production begin to act as a fetter on the further development of the forces of production. For him, the major political developments of the modern age are to be explained as the result of the long term social and economic developments in which new forms of economic exploitation and property ownership steadily develop. In the capitalist society quest for more profit intensifies exploitation of workers. This creates conditions for the organization of the workers and awakening of class consciousness in the ranks of the proletariat. Revolution occurs to resolve contradictions between the forces of production and the relations of production.

### **3.4.6 Dictatorship of the Proletariat**

The proletarian revolution will lead to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is a necessary prelude to communism. The transient dictatorship is necessary for finishing the tasks of revolution. It is a quasi-state which will function as the representative of the revolutionary working class. It will expropriate the bourgeoisie, centralize all means of production and increase total production as rapidly as possible. In short, the proletarian state will follow revolutionary measures leading to the complete destruction of capitalism. The bourgeoisie will try to stage a counter revolution to restore the old system and so the coercive institutions of the state are needed to restrain the bourgeoisie.

### **3.4.7 Communism**

Communism is the central political idea of Marx's theory. It is a social conception with a philosophical and historical meaning. For Marx, communism is the positive

abolition of private property, of human self-alienation and thus the real appropriation of human nature through and for man. It means that communism abolishes private property in such a way as to move humanity to a more advanced stage of historical development. It will return to men and women something from which they were previously estranged. Marx claimed that communism will resolve the conflict between man and nature. This is an extraordinarily utopian speculative claim. It means that communism will not be a stage of social development, since no further development will come after it. It will inaugurate a new era of human freedom.

Communism will be a system of common ownership of the means of production. But it would not regress behind enormous historical advance for the human species represented by capitalism. It is this historical dimension that distinguishes Marx's conception of communism from previous one which were utopian. The historical possibility of communism is based on the revolutionary role that capitalism plays in developing the forces of production.

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## **3.5 Different strands of Marxism**

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Changing class relations, tremendous survival capacity of capitalism and application of Marxism in distinct and undeveloped societies have led to the rise of different strands Marxism. The following forms of the Marxist tradition are noteworthy.

### **3.5.1 Orthodox Marxism**

Orthodox Marxism is closely linked to the experience of soviet communism and to the contribution of V. I. Lenin and Joseph Stalin. It was concerned with the issues of leadership, political organization and economic management. In fact 20th century is best understood as orthodox Marxism modified by a set of Leninist theories and doctrines. Lenin's central contribution to Marxism was his theory of the Vanguard Party. He argued that the workers under the influence of bourgeois ideas and values would not realize its revolutionary potential. By itself the proletariat could not go beyond trade union consciousness. Hence, a revolutionary party duly armed with a revolutionary theory was needed to serve as a vanguard of the working class. This would be tightly knit party of professional and dedicated revolutionaries capable of exercising ideological leadership. The party was to be based on the principle of democratic centralism, a belief in freedom of debate coupled with unity of action.

In *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin analysed colonialism as

an economic phenomenon and highlighted the possibility of turning world war into class war. According to him, a new and final epoch of capitalism had emerged in which competition is replaced by monopoly and the concentration of capital and class antagonism had reached their extremes. Whole world had been subjected to the parasitic exploitation of the most powerful capitalist states. Capitalism, in the imperialist stage had become parasitic, oppressive and decadent. It had simplified the task of bringing the whole economy under society's control and created a complete material basis for socialism.

### **Stalinism**

Stalin made Marxism more dogmatic. He was no great theoretician. Stalinism refers to a distinctive politico economic system. His most important ideological shift was to propound the doctrine of 'Socialism in one country'.

He proclaimed that Soviet Union could succeed in building socialism without the need for international revolution. This clearly distinguished his position from that of Marx and Lenin who had deep commitment to internationalism. This doctrine dictated the drive for industrialization, and collectivization, justified by the need to resist capitalist encirclement and to eliminate kulak as a class.

### **Maoism**

Maoism is usually understood as an anti-bureaucratic form of Marxism that places its faith in the revolutionary zeal of the masses. As a political theorist Mao Ze Dong accepted Marxism-Leninism to the needs of a predominantly agricultural and traditional society. Mao's concept of the mass line introduced an element of democratic participation from below under party guidance, which was wholly absent in the soviet tradition.

His ideas regarding the participation of the bourgeoisie in the revolution before and after 1949 integrated non-proletarian elements into the revolutionary process in China to a degree which was carried a step further by synthesis between national and social revolution in Asia. He launched a great war on bureaucracy and thus, placed the agenda for the future. He tried to combine the principle of working class leadership over the peasants with the conviction that the centre of gravity of chinese society was to be found in the country side and the peasantry must play an active part in building a new socialist China.

### **3.5.2 Western Marxism**

Western Marxism is a term used to describe a wide variety of Marxist theoreticians

based in western and central Europe. It arises from the uniform defeat of the working class movements and emergence of fascist forces in western Europe in the inter-War period. It challenged Soviet Marxism and shifted the emphasis from political economy and state to culture, Philosophy and art. Some of the important spokes persons of this tradition are Rosa Luxemburg, George Lukacs, Karl Korsch, Antonio Gramsci, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Louis Althusser and Jurgen Habermas. It has led to the emergence of a number of distinct schools of thought such as Austro-Marxism, the Frankfurt School, Structural Marxism, Analytical Marxism and Post-Marxism.

The philosophical orientation of western Marxists implied principles which conflicted with Leninism. They relied more on councils and other forms of self management rather than the Vanguard Party.

Western Marxists identified alienation, fetishism and ideology as important issues before the working class movement. Basic texts of the second international and Soviet Marxism, treated Marxism as a universal science of history and nature. Western Marxists opposed this trend arguing that such positivist approach undermined the critical categories of subjectivity and class consciousness. Marxism according to them, was not a general science but a theory of society. Opposing positivism and crude materialism inherent in Soviet Marxism, Western Marxists argued that Marxism was primarily a critique of Political economy. Lukacs viewed Marxism as committed to the emancipation of the working class from the rule of capital.

Western Marxism has tried to face the predicament of the revolutionary socialist movements in the west by advancing alternative explanations. The works of Antonio Gramsci has been pioneering in this regard. He drew attention to the degree to which the class system is upheld not simply by unequal economic and political power, but also by bourgeois hegemony. This consists of the spiritual and cultural supremacy of the ruling class brought about through the spread of bourgeois values and beliefs via civil society. Gramsci's analysis has drawn attention to the interaction of socialists in the sphere of civil society, ideology and popular cultures much more differently than earlier versions of Marxism suggested.

Frankfurt school, whose leading members Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Habermas, attempted to recast the classical ideas of Marx while remaining faithful to certain Marxist principles. The ideas of the Frankfurt school are generally referred to as critical theory, a blend of Marxist political economy, Hegelian philosophy and Freudian psychology. They sought to reinvigorate and develop Marxism by highlighting the expansion of the state into more and more



areas, growing interlocking of base and superstructure, the spread of “culture industry” and the development of authoritarianism. Their primary purpose was to expose the particular social basis of apparently anonymous domination and identify the forces responsible for preventing people from attaining consciousness of themselves as subjects capable of positive action.

French Marxist Louis Althusser developed a form of structural Marxism. According to him Marxist theory is concerned essentially with the structural analysis of social totality. The object of such analysis is to disclose the deep structure which underlines and produces the visible phenomena of social life.

Analytical Marxism associated with John Elster and John Roemer, has attempted to fuse Marxism with methodological individualism. They do not believe that history is shaped by collective entities like class. They attempt to explain collective action in terms of rational calculation of individual self-interests.

### **3.5.3 Post-Marxism**

Post-Marxism may be seen as a progressive movement away from economism and objectivism towards a greater emphasis on context, politics and hegemony. It is an attempt to salvage certain key Marxist insights by attempting to reconcile Marxism with aspects of post-modernism and post-structuralism. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe contended that the priority traditionally accorded to social class and the central position of the working class in bringing about social change is no longer sustainable. The advent of new social movements is seen as evidence of the fact that power in contemporary societies is increasingly dispersed and fragmented. The new social movements offer new and rival centres of power. The class based politics has been replaced by a new politics based on democratic pluralism.

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## **3.6 Critique of Marxism**

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Marxism has changed out of all recognition in the last few decades. Marxism has been questioned not only by critics but also by Marxists.

Critics argue that it has simplified the class division of society into two classes—owning class and the workers. This is far from the reality. Society is very complex and is divided into numerous groups. There is no clear cut division of classes as envisaged by classical Marxism. Marx's prediction that with the development of capitalism middle class would disappear and merge with the proletariat did not come

true. In reality middle class has been strengthened both in size and position. The condition of the working class has not deteriorated as predicted by Marx.

Marx predicted that the inherent contradictions of capitalism would ultimately lead to its destruction. This again has not been corroborated by facts. Indeed capitalism has shown tremendous capacity for adaptation.

Similarly Marx's argument that proletarian revolution would occur only in advanced capitalist societies has been proved false. In fact, revolution did take place in undeveloped societies of Russia and China.

One of the major reason for the theoretical critique of Marxism is that economism, determinism and structuralism did not offer a convincing explanation of economic, social and political developments in contemporary societies. Economism emphasizes that economic relations determine social and political relations and thus, focuses on structural explanation, allowing very little space for agency. Empirical analysis indicated that economic relations of production did not determine culture and ideology or the form of the state. Developed capitalist countries at similar stage of economic development have different more or less democratic or authoritarian form of state. Examination of the politics of capitalist states showed that policy decisions did not always advance the interests of the owner of capital. States clearly have autonomy. Marxists have aimed to theorise that autonomy by developing the concept of relative autonomy of the state and by dropping determinacy altogether.

Some claim that Marxism is dead. The collapse of communism, the triumph of capitalism. New Right ideology and post-modernism have all been credited for the death of Marxism. There is no doubt that Marxism is in crisis. At the same time it is a living theoretical tradition. One cannot find all truth in the works of Karl Marx writing some hundred fifty years ago. It is a rich tradition and has undergone substantial change as it has struggled to reject economism, determinism and structuralism. It focuses upon the problems of capitalism and upon structured inequality which is the key feature of modern society at both the national and international level. It has great utility as a critical analytical framework and the collapse of communism and the changes that have occurred in capitalist society have revitalized rather than diminished its role.

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### **3.7 Summing Up**

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- Karl Marx laid the theoretical foundations of scientific socialism. Lenin and Mao modelled their respective societies by adapting the principles of Marxist

theory to the conditions prevailing in their countries. In the process of doing so, they have enriched the Marxist theory and practice by adding new dimension and by offering diverse interpretations to the original Marxian formulations.

- Western Marxist, while differing with each other in matters of detail, share some common elements in their formulations. They underplay the Marxian doctrine of historical materialism, where the economic base determines the super structure. In stead, they emphasize the role of human consciousness will and culture. For them mere existence of the proletariat is not enough for a revolution to occur. They must develop the necessary revolutionary consciousness. They maintain that ruling classes are able to secure their Hegemony by imposing cultural norms and values on the masses.
- Ultimately it is Marx's writing and the extraordinary richness of his conceptions of social and economic change which has provided inspiration for generations of Marxist intellectuals. Few would claim that Marxism has all the answers to the problems confronting contemporary societies. In many areas it has been found inadequate. But there is a legacy of critical social theory and analysis which remains a key resource for contemporary social scientists.

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### **3.8 Probable Questions**

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#### **Essay Type Questions :**

1. What is Marxism? Discuss its various sources.
2. What is Western Marxism? Examine its contribution to the Marxist theory.
3. Evaluate Marxism and examine its contemporary relevance.

#### **Long Questions :**

1. Explain the meaning of dialectical materialism.
2. Critically examine Marx's theory of historical materialism.
3. Discuss Mao's contribution to the development of Marxism.

**Short Questions :**

1. What is surplus value?
2. Explain the concept of class struggle.
3. Write a short note on communism.

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**3.9 Further Reading**

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1. Avineri S. *The social and political thought of K. Marx*. (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1968)
2. Kolakowski, Leszek, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 3 Vols. (Oxford : Oxford University Press. 1978)
3. McLellan, David. *Marxism After Marx*. (London : Macmillan. 1974)
4. Bottomore, Tom et al (eds) *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*. (Oxford : Basil Blackwell 1987)

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## **Unit 4 □ Anarchist Theory**

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### **Structure**

#### **4.0 Objective**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

#### **4.2 Origin and development**

#### **4.3 Core elements of anarchism**

#### **4.4 Different versions of Anarchism**

##### **4.4.1 Individualist anarchism**

##### **4.4.2 Collectivist anarchism**

#### **4.5 Assessment**

#### **4.6 Summing Up**

#### **4.7 Probable Questions**

#### **4.8 Further Reading**

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### **4.0 Objective**

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This unit introduces students to the anarchist tradition. After going through this unit they will be able to understand and explain the following:

- Nature of anarchist theory;
- Origin and development of anarchism;
- Core elements of anarchism;
- Different strands of anarchist tradition; and
- Anarchist methods.

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### **4.1 Introduction**

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It is difficult to explain anarchism precisely. Some scholars have raised doubt about the possibility of providing a satisfactory definition of anarchism. This is because of the impossibility of identifying common features from among the different versions of anarchism. Even though some relatively stable principles may

be identified from different accounts of anarchism, commentators differ in their opinion as to which are the core ones. Besides, the term anarchism has often been used in a negative sense. It was initially used to imply breakdown of civilized order. In popular perception it is equated with chaos and disorder. Sometimes its opponents deliberately associate it with any number of social ills to discredit it.

Anarchists, however, vehemently contest such associations. It was after the publication of Pierre Joseph Proudhon's book *What is Property?* that the word anarchism came to be associated with a positive set of political ideas. Anarchists propagate the idea of abolition of government and law in the belief that a more natural and spontaneous social order will emerge. Similarly the attempt to link anarchism with violence is simply misrepresentation of the ideology. Most anarchists believe that violence is counter productive and unacceptable.

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## **4.2 Origin and Development**

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Although anarchist principles were first systematically stated in the late eighteenth century in William Godwin's book *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, the roots of anarchist ideas had their roots in the distant past. The stoic philosophers of ancient Greece expressed doubts about the efficacy of political institutions and favoured creation of a social condition in which men will act freely in response to the natural instinct of sociability and justice. In the medieval age some religious sects advocated that professing and practicing christian ideas and values were adequate to the task of maintaining a free and fair civil life. In the 16th and 17th century anti monarchists propagated the idea of free individual. In 18th century England the Levellers and Diggers interpreted the law of nature as endowing human individuals with innate and inalienable rights which legal and political institutions protect. In France the physiocrats believed in a natural order of society. Economic individualism reflected in the works of Adam Smith and socialist theory regarding exploitation of the workers in modern society significantly influenced anarchist thinking about man and society.

The word anarchism came into vogue during the French Revolution when there was practically no authority to enforce rules and regulations and the people had no faith in the existing legal system. The term anarchism was used to explain this situation.

William Godwin in his *Enquiry concerning Political justice* gave classic statement of anarchist principles. He opposed both political authority and the institution of private property. He argued that state power corrupts and misleads people. Pierre Joseph Proudhon described property as theft and maintained that state originated

from the need to protect private property. According to him, political authority is an enemy of justice and reason.

Russian anarchists Michael Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin contributed significantly to the development of anarchist theory. Bakunin's anarchism was based on a belief in human sociability, which is expressed in the desire for freedom within a community of equals. He propounded a view of free individuals which put him at odds with Karl Marx and his followers.

Kropotkin's anarchism was based upon a theory of evolution. Mutual aid, he argued, is the principal means of human development and this constitutes the empirical basis for both anarchism and communism. State for him, is a coercive institution and need to be replaced by a web of freely functioning groups.

Russian novelist Tolstoy gave a new dimension to anarchist thinking by emphasizing the principles of non-violence and pacifism. In his writings he developed the image of a corrupt and false modern civilization. He believed that salvation could be attained by living according to religious principles and returning to a simple rural life.

In the early 20th century anarchism became a genuine mass movement in Europe and Latin America. However, the growth of authoritarianism and political repression associated with it gradually undermined anarchism in both the continent. The influence of anarchism also subsided with success of Bolshevik revolution in Russia and the growing prestige of communism within the revolutionary movements.

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### **4.3 Core elements of Anarchism**

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Anarchist thinkers have stated the theory in their own way which have created a lot of confusion. Its supporters have drawn upon elements from different political traditions. It has been regarded as a conjoining of liberal individualism with socialist egalitarianism. There are a number of different formations of anarchism and commentators argue that there are no common features ascribed to anarchism. However, anarchist thinkers share certain broad principles which constitute the core elements of the theory. Andrew Heywood identifies four core elements of anarchism. These are: anti-statism, natural order anti-clericalism and economic freedom.

#### **Anti-Statism**

Anarchism regards the state as undesirable, unnecessary and harmful. Hostility to the state is shared by all anarchist thinkers. The state is without any natural or

historical justification and it is opposed to man's natural cooperative instinct. They argue that state authority is based upon political inequality and it enslaves, oppresses and limits human life. It is based upon compulsion, fear, egoism and exclusion.

Anarchists argue that government and law represent negative and destructive forces. Law can control every sphere of individual life and thereby prevent the development of individuality. According to US anarchist Emma Goldman government is symbolized by the gun, the handcuff or the prison. For the anarchists, state is in effect a concentrated form of evil.

### **Natural Order**

Anarchists in general support the view that human beings are essentially rational. They believe that people are naturally inclined to organize their lives in a peaceful and harmonious fashion. Anarchists of all shades believe in the natural goodness of the mankind. They maintain that social order arises naturally and spontaneously and this makes machinery of law and order unnecessary.

However, anarchist thinkers acknowledge that human beings could be selfish and competitive as well as sociable and cooperative depending on the social, political and economic circumstances within which they live.

### **Anti-Clericalism**

Hostility to the organised religion constitutes third core element of anarchism. The Church obliges poor persons to reconcile their lot with a system which brings them sorrow and degradation. Anarchists argue that emancipation of the human being demands rejection of christianity. Religion and political authority often work in unison. Religion, they maintain, is one of the pillars of the state. Moreover, religion seeks to establish a code of acceptable behaviour and in the process destroys moral autonomy of the individual and their capacity to make independent judgement.

Despite their hostile attitude to the organised religion anarchists profess a positive view of the religious impulse. They have utopian faith in the unlimited possibility of development of the human self and in the unity of all living things.

### **Economic Freedom**

Anarchists are united in their disapproval of the prevailing capitalist system. They are highly critical of managed capitalism of the post war era. State intervention in the name of giving capitalism a human face, actually strengthens the system of class exploitation. They vehemently oppose Soviet style state socialism and planned



economy. Individualist anarchists argue that planned economy violates property rights and individual freedom. For the collectivist anarchists state socialism is self contradictory in the sense that state itself becomes the source of exploitation replacing the capitalist class. Anarchists prefer an economy in which individuals freely manage their own affairs without state regulation.

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## **4.4 Different versions of Anarchism**

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There are a number of different versions of anarchism. The most important of these are individualist anarchism and collectivist anarchism.

### **4.4.1 Individualist Anarchism**

There are many different types of individualist anarchism. Philosophical anarchism of William Godwin captures many of the core features of classical liberalism. It prefers absolute prohibition of coercion in order to protect the negative rights of the individual, Consensual agreements among individuals is the only legitimate basis of human interaction. William Godwin developed an extreme form of liberal rationalism. According to him, human beings are essentially rational creatures. Education and enlightened judgement propel them to live in accordance with truth and universal moral law. Unlike liberals, individualist anarchists regard constitutionalism and democracy as simply facade to hide political oppression.

Max Stirner developed an extreme form of individualist anarchism on the basis of his idea of sovereign individual. The individual should act as he or she chooses ignoring law, conventions, religious or moral principles.

Liberatarians like David Thoreau, Benjamin Tucker and Joseph Warren took individualist argument to a new height. Thoreau argued that government is an impediment to establish spiritual truth and self-reliance. According to him, individual should follow only the dictates of his/her conscience. For him demands of political obligation is secondary to the dictates of individual conscience.

Benjamin Tucker believed that autonomous individuals could live and work together in peace through a system of market exchange. Warren claimed that individual right to property is supreme. However, they are forced to work with others to take advantage of division of labour. He believed that this could be achieved by developing a system of labour for labour exchange. Tucker claimed that genuine anarchism is consistent with free market, free trade principles. Free working of the market forces will make government and law unnecessary.

Another variant of individualist anarchism is anarcho capitalism. Its proponents vehemently oppose state intervention in the economy. Robert Nozick, a right wing libertarian, argued for a minimal state, whose principal function is to protect individual rights. Ayn Rand, Murray Rothbard and David Friedman pushed further free market ideas. They argued that market can replace government and satisfy all human needs. The main target of anarcho, capitalist attack is state legislation that restricts self-ownership such as imposition of minimum health and safety regulations, paternalistic prohibition of drug, alcohol and tobacco, compulsory wearing of seatbelts or violating property rights by destructive welfare policies.

#### **4.4.2 Collectivist Anarchism**

Collectivist anarchism, some times called social anarchism, is identified by its emphasis on human capacity to work together for common good. Because of their social and cooperative character natural and proper relationship among human beings is one of sympathy, affection and harmony. This makes government regulation unnecessary. Thus, collectivist anarchists reject state and state like bodies. For them state is a political form of hierarchical institution which makes social solidarity impossible. State primarily functions to support property relations that support economic inequality maintained by a coercive apparatus.

The main form of social anarchism are anarchist communism and anarcho syndicalism. Anarchist communism is historically associated with Errico Malatesta and Kropotkin. It is based on the optimistic belief about the human capacity for cooperation. Anarcho communists argue that since labour is social wealth created through human cooperation should be owned in common by the community rather than by any single individual. Private property is, in effect, the exploitation of workers by employers who merely own it. Kropotkin sought to provide a scientific basis for social solidarity by re-examining Darwin's theory of evolution. He had a strong belief in the importance of the cooperative and altruistic features of human personality. He argued in his book *Mutual Aid* that cooperation is a vital force in human evolution which turns not upon competition and survival of the fittest.

Anarcho communists believed that true communism demands abolition of the state. Kropotkin argued in terms of the abolition of the state and its replacement by a decentralized network of small self-sufficient communities based upon voluntary agreements.

Anarcho syndicalism is most often associated with Emile Pouget, Rocker and Lucy Parsons. In the recent era Noam Chomsky is perhaps the most famous advocate

of anarcho syndicalism. Syndicalist ideas are an attempt to revise Marxism in the light of new experience gained from growing labour movement in Europe in late 19th and early 20th century. Anarcho Syndicalists developed the vision of stateless and classless society with the trade union as its base. They saw trade union or the syndicate as the foundation for a decentralized non-hierarchical society of the future. For them fierce class struggle is the technique of social change. General strike, sabotage and other kinds of direct action are the revolutionary instruments to exert working class power.

The application of anarchist principles to the different contexts of oppression produces distinct forms of anarchism such as anarcho feminism, black anarchism and environmental anarchism. Anarcho-feminists seek new ways to identify, examine and confront male domination. Black anarchists seek structures that allow them to develop their own forms where they can share their experiences and meet as people from oppressed backgrounds. Such anarchist groups give priority to agents based on ethnicity rather than class. Environmental anarchists recognise the artificiality of the border of nation states and identify human subject as a part of, rather than separate from, the biosphere. They regard environmental problem as a product of oppressive human interaction.

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## 4.5 Assessment

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Critics argue that anarchist ideas are mostly unrealistic. Anarchists put emphasis on the natural inclination of individuals for cooperation and harmony completely ignoring their self seeking and competitive impulses. They display immense faith in innate human rationality. But psychological research suggests that irrational forces are important determinants of human behaviour.

Second, anarchist description of the state as a coercive institution is grossly exaggerated. It completely ignores the role of the state as the engine of development and provider of important welfare services.

Third, anarchist idea of future stateless society with peace, harmony and unbounded individual freedom is a distant dream. It is viewed as the weakest aspect of anarchist theory. Liberty by its nature is limited. There must be restrictions on the liberty of each to ensure liberty for all.

Fourth, critics argue that there is some truth in anarchist criticism of the present state of affairs in which there is misery, suffering and unemployment, but they advocate methods which are destructive. In this they suggest a remedy worse than the disease.

However, anarchist theory has certain positive aspects as well. Anarchist thinkers have drawn attention to the dangers of growing power of the state. They have shown how modern state controls every aspect of individual life in the guise of democracy. They have rightly underscore the need for decentralization to check overgrowth of state power. Infact, in the contemporary increasingly complex and fragmented world anarchism with its emphasis on equality, participation and decentralization may be better equipped to respond to the challenges facing humanity.

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## 4.6 Summing Up

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- Anarchist ideal has been developed on the basis of two rival traditions: liberalism and socialism. Thus anarchism can be thought of as a point of intersection between liberalism and socialism.
- Anarchists are uncompromising in rejecting all institutions of political control. Like the communists the anarchists are vehement critics of the institution of private property. They hold that private property by its very nature is an offence against justice. They are bitter critics of religion. Religion, they claim, supports servitude and inequality.
- The anarchists believe that the law of organic evolution is primarily a law of natural aid, not of conflict. Their ideal is a free society from which the coercive elements will disappear. The anarchist society will be based on purely voluntary cooperation.
- Two major anarchist tradition may be identified; one of which is individualist and the other is collectivist. Individual anarchists support the market and private property, while collectivist anarchists advocate an economy based upon cooperation and collective ownership.

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## 4.7 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Discuss the core elements of anarchist theory.
2. Discuss the basic arguments of the individualist anarchists.
3. Evaluate anarchism as a distinct theoretical tradition.

**Long Questions :**

1. Explain the anarchist attitude to the state.
2. Examine the anarchist concept of natural order.

**Short Questions :**

1. Write a short note on anarchist view of individual liberty.
2. Write an essay on collectivist anarchism.

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**4.8 Further Reading**

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1. Heywood Andrew, *Political Ideologies, An Introduction*. (Palgrave, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 3rd ed. 2003)
2. Franks, Benjamin. "Anarchists" in Michael Freeden et al (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*. (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2013)
3. Marshall, P., *Demanding the Impossible : A History of Anarchism*. (London : Fontana, 1993)

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## **Unit 5 □ Conservative Theory**

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### **Structure**

#### **5.0 Objective**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

#### **5.2 Meaning of Conservatism**

#### **5.3 Features of Conservatism**

#### **5.4 Different versions of Conservatism**

##### **5.4.1 Reactionary conservatism**

##### **5.4.2 Radical Conservatism**

##### **5.4.3 Moderate Conservatism**

##### **5.4.4 New right Conservatism**

#### **5.5 Critique of Conservatism**

#### **5.6 Summing Up**

#### **5.7 Probable Questions**

#### **5.8 Further Reading**

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### **5.0 Objective**

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After reading this unit students will be able to understand.

- Multiple use of the term conservatism
- Meaning of conservatism
- Some general features of conservatism
- Different versions of conservatism

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### **5.1 Introduction**

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Conservative ideas emerged in response to the rapid pace of social, political and economic change ushered in by the French Revolution. It is generally viewed as an

ideology of status quo and an attempt to prevent change. However, theorizing about conservative ideology is no easy task. This is because it has assumed different meaning in different historical contexts. Thus, in the 19th century conservatives entertained a hierarchical and inegalitarian social structure, before the first world war some of them defended the older liberal tradition of atomistic individualism and a free market, and in the 1950s conservatives appeared reconciled to the redistributive welfare state.

Conservative thought has varied considerably as it has adapted itself to the existing traditions and national cultures. In spite of all historical variations it is possible to identify the basic principles on which conservatism is based. According to Clinton Rossiter, these principles are : (i) The existence of a universal moral order sanctioned and supported by organised religion. (ii) belief in the imperfect nature of men and their selfishness and greed for power; (iii) the natural inequality of men; (iv) the necessity of gradations of social status and position; (v) the primary role of private property in ensuring security and liberty of the individual; (vi) the uncertainty of progress; (vii) the need for a ruling and serving bureaucracy; (viii) respect for tradition, established customs and institutions; (ix) possibility of tyranny of the majority and the consequent need for diffusing, limiting and balancing political power.

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## **5.2 Meaning of Conservatism**

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The term conservatism convey different meanings. It may refer to a person with a moderate and cautious behaviour, or a lifestyle that is conventional, even conformist, or fear of change. It is sometimes dismissed as an anti-ideology inspired by self-interest and fear of change with no coherent alternative of its own to offer. In this sense conservatism is a negative philosophy which preaches resistance to change. It is thus a political attitude rather than an ideology.

For Samuel Huntington, conservatism is a positional ideology, lacking both an intellectual tradition and substantive ideals. In Michael Oakeshott's formulation, conservatism prefers familiar to the unknown, tried to the untried, fact to the mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded, the near to the distant, the sufficient to the super abundant and the convenient to the perfect. In this sense conservatism is a psychological mood.

In fact, conservatism is more than an attitude of mind, or an approach to life or a natural disposition of human mind. According to Andrew Heywood, conservatism is neither simple pragmatism nor mere opportunism. It is based upon a particular set of political beliefs about man and the society in which they live in and the importance of a specific set of political values. Hence, like liberalism and socialism, it should rightfully be described as an ideology.

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### **5.3 Features of Conservatism**

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The desire to conserve is the underlying theme of conservative ideology though it is not the sole objective which conservatives of all shades entertain. The characteristic features of conservatism as evolved over time can be identified in a following manner.

First, conservatism is not an ideology of the status quo. It is not merely an attempt to prevent change and to arrest historical process. On the contrary, it is an ideology fundamentally concerned with the problem of change. It does not seek to eliminate change, but to make it safe. Conservatives identify desirable change as growth and 'natural'. They advocate only that change which is respectful of the past and safe. History as organic growth makes change acceptable because its pace does not exceed the ability of people to adjust to it and it does not appear to be instituted by human planning. In fact, conservatives try to set limits to the scope of political action. They advocate limited politics against a belief in the desirability of radical political and social change.

Second, conservatives believe in the extra-human origin of the social order. It is independent of the human will. The search for harmony, equilibrium and order has adopted many forms—God, history, biology and science have served as extra-human factors of the social order. In the 19th century, conservatives saw stability as a function of natural order, or hierarchy. In the early part of the 20th century their main concern was to identify immutable psychological principles of human nature which justify property ownership as expressions of human worth. In the era of welfare statism and thereafter the appeal has been to scientific economic laws endowed with universal validity.

The belief in the extrahuman origin of society has prompted conservatives to reject the concept of individual with free will and purpose. Conservatives question



the rationality of artificial human design and planning. This amounts to marginalize the role of politics understood as a deliberate and purposive human activity. Roger Scruton has interpreted this marginalization of politics as "Political Scepticism".

Third, conservatism is an ideology that attains self awareness when exposed by its ideological opponents. It reacts to them in looking glass manner. Karl Mannheim regarded conservatism as a counter movement and this fact makes it reflective.

Much conservative theorising has developed in response to the spread of core liberal concepts of rationality, individuality, liberty and responsible power. Conservatives reject liberal concept of rationality because of its overcritical attitude. Rationality asserts the sovereignty of the individual. In the name of abstract logic it challenges existing authority. It holds out the hope that human will can refashion history in whatever ways human ideals may require. All these run counter to the conservative belief. They marginalize the liberal concept of rationality and individuality in the name of order, stability and continuity.

Likewise they dismiss the idea of human perfectibility. They base their theories on the belief that human beings are both imperfect and unperfectible. Citing French and Russian Revolution they argued against any attempt to reorganize society. History provides no clue to the future. History is not patterned. It is not a repository of grand law of motion. Rather, it is a repository of sensible rules of practice.

All these conservative beliefs and values have been fashioned out of reactions to progressive ideological concepts.

Fourth, the intellectual development of conservatism lies in the fact that the most recent antagonist dictates the form and tempo of its response. Its perceived enemies change contingently over time. Classical liberals, welfare liberals, socialists, fascists, communists whenever any ideological configuration is viewed as the most menacing source of externally induced change, conservatives came up with response which they believed to be most effective conceptual strategy. Thus, in the face of liberal appeal to individual rights and egalitarianism conservatives insisted on the virtues of paternalism and responsibility. Towards the end of the 19th century conservatives attacked liberal and socialist welfare policies by highlighting the importance of private property rights as anchor of the social order and reaffirmed the importance of traditional institutions as protectors of the nation against unprecedented social upheaval.

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## 5.4 Different versions of Conservatism

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The unifying theme of all shades of conservatives is to set limits to the scope of political action by identifying the ineradicable sources of tension at the heart of the human situation. However, different conservative thinkers have theorised the ideas of limit and tension in so different ways that they have given rise to incompatible versions of conservative ideology. Noel O'Sullivan has divided them into four schools: the reactionary, the radical, the moderate and new right schools.

### 5.4.1. The Reactionary School

The reactionary school is known for its outright rejection of modern radical and progressive thought. It is nostalgic about a pre-revolutionary golden age. Reactionary conservatives contended that no society can survive unless its political institutions are based on unified religious and moral values. Modern secular democracy inevitably destroys spiritual control by encouraging diversity of self-expression. This undoubtedly makes way for the emergence of some colossal tyrant. This possibility cannot be averted by the liberal tactics of granting more liberty, rights and new constitution. Religious reaction is the only hope in this situation. Radical argument that man can abandon religion and pursue happiness through creative activities, has created a spiritual void in modern democracies.

Extending the critique of modern democracy, reactionary conservative thinkers argue that linking modern democracy with capitalism legitimates a ruthless ethic of self-seeking and thereby makes it difficult to achieve a consensus on fundamental values. It is argued that self-seeking ethic has replaced the old form of oppression by an aristocracy with oppression by a new business plutocracy. Egalitarian ideal of modern democracy has made it impossible to transmit a common cultural heritage to each new generation, which in turn has created spiritual rootlessness. T.S. Eliot described modern mass democracy as a 'waste land'.

The reactionary critique of modern democracy is inspired by an essentially utopian vision of a perfectly harmonious hierarchical society. When this vision proves to be unattainable, their immediate response is to attribute its failure to conspirators, to demonise some groups or other.

The condemnation of democratic modernity has led to their marginalisation in politics. They have responded to this situation either by advocating extraconstitutional

methods for overthrowing established order or by joining a revolutionary political party better placed to overthrow established order or by compromising with modern democracy by adopting a charismatic concept of leadership, capable of uniting the people in the face of divisive impact of representative institutions, or by abandoning politics altogether and confining them to purely private activities.

#### **5.4.2 Radical Conservatism**

Radical conservatives profess completely different view of democratic modernity. Its members insist that to remain relevant conservatism must embrace democratic modernity positively. This can most successfully be done by mobilising the masses in support of a leader who rejects both liberal and socialist strategy in favour of an ideology which combines nationalism with socialism in a synthesis intended to integrate the whole population.

Radical conservative thinkers were associated with Nazism in the inter war period. In the post war era they tried to make conservative school more respectable by adopting three intellectual strategies. First was the rejection of the leader principal in its individualised form. The second was rejection of nationalist doctrine in favour of a supranational idea of European unity. Third strategy was rejection of extra constitutional political methods in favour of the gradualist programme of mass political education.

#### **5.4.3 Moderate Conservatism**

Moderate conservatism is characterised by support for a liberal idea of a limited state ruled by law, with representative institutions and constitutional checks on executive power. However, they reject abstract rationalist concepts used by liberals. However, moderate conservatives interpret their concept of limit in different ways,

For Edmund Burke, the source of moderation is divinely ordained structure of the universe. He believed that society was shaped by natural law and this was reflected in the balanced constitution of Britain. The reason for British success is that British people have rejected abstract political ideal in favour of a constitutional polity working after the pattern of nature. If the human beings tamper with natural law, they are challenging the will of god and as a result they are likely to make human affairs worse rather than better. Burke did not advocate blind resistance to change, but rather a prudent willingness to change in order to conserve. He opposed any attempt to

recast politics in accordance with abstract principles such as liberty, equality and fraternity. According to him, wisdom resides largely in experience, tradition and history. Burkean conservatism is characterised by caution, moderation and pragmatism.

The commitment of the moderate conservatives to the ideal of the limited state has proved difficult to defend because of its link to an organic vision of society. Conservatives have traditionally thought of society as an organism. An organic society is fashioned by natural necessity. Society has a natural tendency towards harmony provided it remains under the guidance of what Burke called 'natural aristocracy'.

Coleridge, however, has shown greater realism by insisting that organic view of society would only be plausible if it takes account of the demand for political reform arising from the spread of the democratic sentiment and disruptive effects of the industrial revolution on social orders. He maintained that in the changed situation organic social order could only be achieved if the state adopted a far more interventionist role than Burke had envisaged. He also emphasized the need for restructuring the state in a way that allowed a shift of political power away from the aristocratic leadership towards the newly influential middle class. Similar sentiment was expressed in Carlyle's proposal for abolishing parliamentary government and promoting instead charismatic style of leadership to bridge the gap between the nation's institutions and its spiritual values. This could be done by articulating the unstated demands of the people.

Disraeli advocated moderate revision of the organic view of society and it proved much more influential. Like Burke, he believed that no society is safe unless there is a public recognition of the provincial government of the world. He expressed the fear that growing industrialisation and economic inequality would divide Britain into two nations: the rich and the poor. This could only be averted by reducing hours of labour and humanising the working conditions of the labour. He supported the need for a more interventionist state and extending the suffrage beyond the middle class.

Disraeli emphasised the organic conservative belief that society is held together by an acceptance of duty and obligations. The rich must bear the burden of social responsibility. They have a responsibility for the poor. Similarly the ruler has a parental responsibility for the nation. Disraeli's ideas had considerable impact upon conservatism and in England these ideas provided the basis of what is called one nation conservatism.

In the 1960s in UK conservatives put emphasis on the need for a 'middle way' between the extremes of laissez-faire liberalism and socialism. This idea was most clearly expressed in Harold Macmillan's book "The Middle Way". Macmillan advocated planned capitalism which combines state ownership or regulation of certain aspects of the economy with the drive and initiative of private enterprise. The purpose of paternalistic conservatism is to consolidate hierarchy rather than to remove it.

In Continental Europe the so called middle way took the form of a social market economy. This is best expressed in the christian democratic ideal which combines socialist sympathies with a rejection of secular human culture and a conservative stress on authority and traditional institutions like the family and the church.

#### **5.4.4 New Right Conservatism**

During the 1970s growing state power, rising inflation, increasing welfare dependency, family breakdown led to the development of a set of more radical ideas within conservatism, known as new right conservatism. This is not an intellectually homogeneous movement. O'sullivan identifies three conflicting responses to the breakdown of the social democratic consensus.

The first response consists in the reformulation of the organic position. This is known as neo-conservatism. The principal concerns of the neo-conservatives are law and order, public morality and national identity. Roger Scruton, Irving Kristol, Russel Kirk are the leading theorists of this kind. They believe that decline of authority has led to rising crime, delinquency and anti-social behaviour in the western societies. The situation can only be dealt with by strengthening authority relationships in the family, school and larger society. They expressed concern over the fall of moral and social standard that was underminig cohesion of society.

Neo Conservatives want to strengthen national identity in the face of threats from within and without. They want to restore national sentiment which is weakened by the growth of multi culturalism and cultural diversity. For Roger Scruton a shared sense of national identity is the only possible bond for modern European states, all of which are societies of strangers. According to him, restoring national loyalty will unite religion and culture in a way that will give concrete loyalty to the Burkean contract between the living, the dead, and the unborn.

The second response of new right conservatism was based on defending the free market. F. A. Hayek was the most influential advocate of this version. He argued that there can be no middle way compromise between outright collectivism and the free market. He pointed to the inefficiency of a centrally planned economy. It is not possible to collect knowledge of the entire economic resources. In reality practical knowledge is necessarily dispersed throughout society and can only be coordinated by the market. Hayek put emphasis on custom and tradition, rather than planning as the principal force integrating the social order.

The third response is the attempt to deal with the breakdown of the social democratic consensus by reviving the ideal of civil association. The essence of this ideal is to construct a form of political solidarity that depends only on the mutual recognition of civilized men and women. In a state of this kind different religious and cultural groups are at liberty to profess and practice their values without disturbing common peace. The government is only concerned with the limited task of securing peace to create the possibility of a civilisation. Michael Oakeshott is its most impressive philosophical proponent.

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## 5.5 Evaluation

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Conservatism is too broad and has become too vague an ideology. Reactionary conservatives desire to pull the clock back is that it pursues a romantic vision of a social order that prevents any compromise with the realities of social order.

Radical conservative's faith in a politically unaccountable national leader makes it unpopular in societies which have a strong democratic culture. Although radical conservatism claims to be a movement of national unification, in practice it offers no protection against a slide into totalitarian dictatorship.

Similarly Burke's ambitions attempt to provide a theological ground for moderate conservatism entails a dogmatic claim to knowledge about God's plan for mankind. It also makes dogmatic claim that social and political hierarchy is divinely ordained.

Critics argue that theoretical foundations of conservatism is not convincing. The very concept of sacred body of customs and traditions is historically unfounded. The use of organic metaphor for understanding society denies creative role of the individual in relation to his circumstances.

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## 5.6 Summng Up

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- Conservatism is an ideology of conservation. It developed essentially as a reaction against the growing pace of political and economic changes in the west. It is fundamentally concerned with the problem of change. As a philosophy it defends the values of tradition, hierarchy and order. Conservatism is characterized by support for tradition, order, duty, authority and property. Conservatives have traditionally put emphasis on the limitations of human rationality. Rejecting abstract principles they highlight the importance of experience, history and pragmatism.
- Conservatives do not have optimistic belief in the ability of political action to transform society into a rationally grounded order. However, they have theorised the ideas of limits of political action in different ways giving rise to different versions of conservative ideology: reactionary, the radical, moderate and the new right schools.
- Reactionary coservatives reject any idea of reform. They contend that no society can survive unless its political institutions are based on consensus on fundamental religious and moral values. Radical conservatives reject both liberal commitment to parliamentary institution and socialist emphasis on class conflict. They favour an ideology which would integrate the whole population. Moderate conservatism is more cautious and more flexible. It is characterised by the belief in 'change in order to conserve'. New Right conservatism is radically anti statist and anti paternalist drawing heavily from classical liberal themes and values.

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## 5.7 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. What is new right conservatism? Explain its nature and characteristics.
2. Discuss the nature and characteristics of moderate conservatism.
3. Evaluate conservatism as a distinct theoretical tradition.

### Long Questions :

1. Discuss the characteristics of conservatism.
2. Examine the basic arguments of the reactionary conservatives.
3. Examine the core elements of conservatism.

**Short Questions :**

1. Explain the meaning of conservatism.
2. What are the basic principles of conservatisms
3. Write a short note on neoconservatism.

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**5.8 Further Reading**

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1. Scruton, R., *The meaning of conservatism*. (Basingstoke : Macmillan, 2001)
2. O' Sullivan, Conservatism, in Michael Freeden et al (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*. (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2013)
3. Freeden Michael, *Idcologies and Political Theory; A conceptual Approach* Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1996)
4. Heywood, Andrew, *Political Ideologies, An introduction*. (Palgrave, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 3rd ed. 2003)



## **MODEL - 2**



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## **Unit 6 □ Approaches to Political Theory : Normative Approach and Historical Approach**

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### **Structure**

#### **6.0 Objective**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

#### **6.2 Normative Approach**

##### **6.2.1 Characteristics of Normative Approach**

##### **6.2.2 Limitations of Normative Approach**

##### **6.2.3 Relevance of Normative Approach to Political Science**

#### **6.3 Historical Approach**

#### **6.4 Criticism of Historical Approach**

#### **6.5 Summing Up**

#### **6.6 Probable Questions**

#### **6.7. Further Reading**

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### **6.0 Objective**

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After studying the materials of this unit the learners will understand

- the difference between approach and method,
- the characteristics and limitations of normative approach,
- the characteristics and limitations of historical approach.

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### **6.1 Introduction**

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Political Science deals with an infinite number of political phenomena. These phenomena appear to have varied meanings, dimensions and implications. Persons with different persuasions and perspectives look at them differently, think of them differently, understand them differently and explain or analyse them differently and hardly there lies any substantial unity of outlook while taking those phenomena for

understanding, explanation and analysis. What it indicates indeed is that there are several attitudes and approaches to understand and explain political phenomena and on the basis of inner trends and characteristics of each of these attitudes and approaches political narratives and counter-narratives have primarily grown. When the primary political narratives and counter-narratives get logically ordered and systematized, they give birth to political theories.

This foregoing introduction leads us to state that there are various approaches in the domain of political science. By approach in particular, we mean, in the words of Vernon van Dyke, the criteria to employ in selecting the questions to ask and the data to consider relevant in political enquiry. Approach, in fact, denotes the scientific way of studying a subject. The term 'approach' contains a wider implication than 'method' does. In his *Political Ideas and Ideologies*, O. P. Gauba writes that method may be defined as a systematic study of the procedure of inquiry by which reliable knowledge could be obtained and reliable conclusions could be drawn. On the other hand, approach is a wider term which comprehends not only method, but also the focus of our study in order to understand the given phenomenon.

In political science, the political analysts use to accept and follow a criterion or a set of criteria for the purpose of understanding and explanation of political questions or political issues. In this sphere of politics and political science, the same issues or the same political questions are differently viewed and differently explained as different viewers or scholars have their own perspectives or standpoints and particular focus of attention from which they approach to do so. So there arises a variety of approaches to the study of political phenomena as there remains a variety of standards governing the inclusion and exclusion of questions and data in political inquiry. Standard of values or inclinations to values are inherent in each of the varied approaches rife in the domain of political science. Contending standard of values or value preferences of the viewers and scholars lead to the birth of contending approaches which are found to be employed in understanding and analysing same political events and issues simultaneously. Again, it is important to note that an approach developed and grown in a particular period of time may incorporate many new aspects and dimensions. For example, both the liberal and Marxist approaches to the study of the subject-matter of politics and political science have thus developed much over the times by means of incorporating various new concepts and thoughts grown within their respective body of knowledge.

In this unit we would discuss normative and historical approaches, which are thought to be the components of what is called the traditional approach to the study of political science.

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## 6.2 Normative Approach

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As indicated earlier, the traditional study of politics as grown from the days of Plato is largely guided by normative approach. It is thus an old approach, but its trends are found in the political expositions of thinkers and theorists who belong even to the recent generation.

The English term 'normative' is emanated from the Latin term 'norma' which etemologically means 'principle' or standard that is preferred. From this point of view, normative approach mainly lays emphasis on principles, ideals and values. It aims at, as Vernon van Dyke states, making a normative statement that is predominantly concerned with what 'ought to be' or 'should be'. In political inquiry, normative approach appears to avoid the questions that relate to 'what is'. Thinkers and theorists in political science are traditionally found engaged to prescribe the good and the desirable state of affaiirs in their attempt to describe and analyse the state, politics and political organizations. They are, in this realm of normative study, very much conscious in their scholarly devotion to establish norm and value in the place of norm and value they consider counter-intuitive and harmful.

In *Political Science : A Philosophical Analysis*, Vernon van Dyke contends that normative statements always tend to express what is considered the most preferred and desirable. They are concerned not with the practical reality but the intrinsic value aspects reflecting the ends and the purposes. The exponents belonging to this trend are more concerned with evaluation of the issues, things and events that are political and try to find out the value and the moral content of the questions under their explanation and inquiry. They seek to make normative statements which express preference for building a particular order which is intended to become good, moral and ideal for the people. So the basic thinking of normative approach becomes the basis of moral priorities and it prefers good to bad. It discusses thus priorities in values.

It is important to note that the great political philosopher and political theorists from Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Bodin, Locke, Rousseau, Machiaveli down to Green, Mill, Hobhouse, Marx and the many of the recent times such as John Rawls, Leo starauss, Hannah Arendt, Isaiah Berlin, Michael Oakeshott, Dante Germino, John Plamenatz, Robert Nozick etc. belong to this intellectual milieu, and they all have attempted to criticize and repudiate some existing value as enshrined in some political thought or theory and favour and establish some particular value or set of values they think beneficial for the community from their own standpoint. These great thinkers and theorists raise a few general questions in the course of their

political inquiry and on the basis of their personal opinion grown out of their intuition, past experience, general doubt and scepticism, and after logically describing and analysing each of the questions, they come to moral conclusion. The political philosophers and theorists emphasizing norm and values in their respective enterprise have tried to solve the big moral problems concerning the rights and freedom of the individuals, power and legitimacy of the state, consent and obligation towards the authority, relevance and usefulness of revolution and change and etc. The answers and the solutions as advanced by or derived from these philosophers and theorists have their significant cumulative impacts as they have been the sources of enormous political literatures and discourses grown in the later days.

Normative political science contends that it is not essentially bereft of any practical dimension or practical sense. In politics, norm and values are organically present in all issues and events in reality. All political activities found either in parliament or in public protests in the streets and grounds, or in the sphere of policy formulation and policy implementation are dictated or guided by some values to be established or reestablished. The judges in the judiciary work either to establish the constitutional values or to make new moral judgement which, in most cases, gets incorporated into the body of law. Again, in the sphere of undertaking any new research work or project in any field of knowledge, commitment to some value or purpose becomes evident, and it guides the scholar in all phases of his or her research, and the truth to which he or she reaches at the end entails some purpose for the society and the community. So politics can not avoid the relevance of values, on the contrary, it is a value or a set of values that constitutes the content and the realm of politics. It is politics that guides us to find out and accept the right and shun the wrongs. Values are part and parcel of a 'political man'. A man is 'political' because he does have values, and, on the basis of values he acquires the power and ability to differentiate good from the evil.

So it is evident from the foregoing discussion that political inquiry and political analysis of political society, processes and institutions are not possible without their respective value relevance because politics essentially embodies an ethical and conscious purpose. Plato pleads for ideal state, Mill for individual freedom, Marx for classless communist society, Gandhi for Ram Rajya and the feminists of these days for gender equality. Ethical considerations and higher social and philosophical ideals and values have been the motive force for these thinkers, theorists and the philosophers to dip into their respective inquiry and investigation for the discovery of truth they consider true. The men in state power cannot deny the relevance of the ideals and values pronounced and emphasized by the thinkers and theorists, and they more often

than not recuperate their authority from serious crisis with recourse to alternative set of values and principles different from theirs and thus sustain their existence. So values and norms do not altogether reside in the realm of ideas or philosophizing of ideas. Values do have practical value.

### **6.2.1 Characteristics of Normative Approach**

1. Normative political theory or analysis considers and justifies the political questions in the light of definite purpose, pre-determined ideal and cherished principle. It lays emphasis on good rather than evil purpose, 'ought' rather than 'ought not' question, desirable rather than undesirable state of affair, and thus considers the utility and validity of state, politics and political organizations. The purpose of normative political analysis is concerned with the normative ordering or reordering of political society and its institutions and processes so as to ensure people's prosperity both material and moral.
2. Normative political science is mainly committed to deep intellectual discussion, philosophical analysis and moral description of the great issues of politics like basis of state, equality and freedom of the individuals, political obligation, rights of the citizens, law and justice, quality of governance, etc. It is less inclined to deal with description of the factual reality of politics.
3. Normative political science is subjective by nature and for this matter, as many argue, it is more akin and related to philosophy than science. The thinkers and theorists belonging to this normative trend depend on their intuition and sequential logic and counter-logic and reach broad statement relating to any particular course of action rationally considered suitable to any particular time, space and circumstances.
4. Normative analysis of politics lays emphasis on deductive method while describing state, politics and political life of man. Deductive method is philosophical, speculative and a priori. It is, however, argued that thoughts and theorizations as come out of application of this method in political inquiry and investigation at times amount to abstraction and give vent to utopia. But what is relevant here to note that new ideas in all ages appeared as utopia. When these ideas revolutionize the world either at the macro or at the local level, utopia turns into a reality.
5. The statement established in normative political inquiry is mainly prescriptive. A normative statement is inclined to express preference for a particular type of order or a particular course of action which is considered right, moral

or ethical repudiating the wrong, immoral or unethical. In the context of moral values and ideals, normative analysis sedulously searches out the best form of political institution and political system and expresses its assertion regarding how best the political life of man can be ensured.

6. Normative political analysis is very much connected with history. Historical explanation and description of past facts and past events have historically contributed to the growth and development of normative analysis of politics. Normative thoughts gathered momentum in the context of historical changes of political situations. Different and diverse contexts of history have given birth to new values, ideals and ideas which in turn again have changed the reality through ages. Construction and replacement of values, and philosophical ideas are very much inter-connected with the construction and replacement of the phases of human history. From very ancient time down to our own, political philosophers and political theorists have derived historical knowledge and experience from history and thus have enriched their respective political literatures imbued with high philosophical values and vision. Marx spent a big part of his study-life to know and understand the French revolution of the eighteenth century and it led him to theorize on the rise and fall of capitalism and building of the material preconditions for the growth of classless communist society.
7. Normative political analysis also entails an inclination to legal-institutional study. More often than not it starts with state and governmental systems that work under law and constitution. The trend and tradition of juridical and institutional study grow from the days of Pericles and Aristotle. Aristotle had experience of 168 city states, which led him to formulate the scheme of classification of governments and other ideas of high political values and significance.

It is relevant to note that the values, ideas and ideals that the normative political analysts and theoreticians have built from time to time are not fixed and static. Different political analyses and expositions have created new values or new set of values replacing those created earlier. Values may again grow out of reform and refinement of old or prevailing values. New value may also result from value-conflict set in motion in any particular time of turmoil and turbulence. Again, within the same category of values, additional values involving new content and dimension may be incorporated. Liberal political values, for example, grown since the days of Locke, Mill, Bosanquet and Hobhouse, reflect itself as a broad spectrum of political values



involving the recent contribution of liberal thinkers like Hannah Arendt, Isaiah Berlin and John Rawls. Normative political analysis that emphasizes values, precepts and principles does not either belong to so-called crass traditionalism, nor it is anachronistic.

### **6.2.2 Limitations of Normative Approach**

Normative political science aims at political analysis and explanation of political phenomena from moral, ethical and prescriptive standpoint. The very nature of this sort of analysis and explanation is subjectively speculative and value oriented. Normative concern and philosophical overtone has guided the political narratives of centuries since the days of Plato and Aristotle. But this long established tradition of political science met a formidable challenge posed by a group of the pragmatists came in the beginning of the twentieth century. Social scientists having more or less rigorous multi-disciplinary orientation and learning towards scienticism like Graham Wallace, Arthur Bentley, Charles Merriam, Harold Laswell, V. O. Key, George Catlin, Robert Michels, Gaetano Mosca, Karl Popper, all products of the trend of positivism, logical positivism and linguistic philosophy, raised their voice against the relevance, validity and even the dominance of normative political science. They raised against the basic postulates and chief concerns of political theories and analyses based on subjective imagination as opposed to objective verification. They came forward to prefer the 'is' questions in politics and repudiate and nullify the exercise in the realm of what may happen or what ought to do in solving both epistemological and virtual problems in politics.

Secondly, the critics of normative political science are of opinion that normative theories and political analyses are not based on facts. Those have denied the factual reality of politics and thus have given room to allegedly becoming either dogma or utopia. The knowledge as developed from the deep cultivation in the sphere of speculation is far from having any practical utility. The theorists and the political philosophers so far have developed knowledge for knowledge sake. The truth they claim to have established through the process of sequential logic and individual intuition is apparent and hypothetical and not subject to rigorous verification.

Thirdly, Roy C. Macridis contends that normative political analysis is too concerned with the production of ideology and counter-ideology and hence narrow and uni-linear, conservative and repetitive and predominantly monographic. Its orientation is less comparative and hence arid and detached.

Fourthly, the main focus of normative discussion and analysis is heavily limited to legal and institutional aspects of politics. Legal and institutional politics places law

and institution at the centre of attention. But politics is essentially a human activity and political life of man consisting of diverse pulls and pressures constitutes the very core of it. The political phenomena, thus the critics opine, do have a wider critical context and a broad relevant canvas involving various disciplinary dimensions and implications. Their proper understanding and a multi-disciplinary frame of reference alongwith a conscious exercise into it are, therefore, imperative to proper contextualization and satisfying presentation of political phenomena. Normative analysis thus does not bring before us the total meaning immanent in political problems and issues.

Fifthly, critics trained in empirical methodological dispensation have alleged that normative political analysts persistently have tended to make either political history, or metaphysics, pure literature or social philosophy or jurisprudence instead of having a concern for building a science of politics. Knowledge as produced through deductive reasoning in normative analysis is far from being reliable, objective and scientific because observation and experiment, collection of data and application of statistical method, and inter-disciplinary perspective of the political issues or events are given no attention in normative political analysis. Normative approach does have no scientifically valid or reliable method of determining the validity of the moral propositions made regarding politics. Normative political science can best be regarded as a meta-science of ideas and values and prejudice and predilections of those detached from objective reality.

Sixthly, Karl Popper discovers a distinct trend of epistemological domination in the tradition of political thought based on some pre-conceived ideas, axioms and individual values, that have grown since Plato and Aristotle. The notion and image of the 'philosopher king' as made by Plato is totalitarian, according to Popper, as this 'philosopher king' exists beyond the scope of 'falsification'. Hegel's idea of absolutist sovereign state and Marx's idea of class war for social change appeared mythical dictates for Popper as these suppress critical deliberation needed for ascertaining their validity.

Lastly, the focus of normative political tradition dominating political thinking for centuries has been confined only to western political context. All the aspects and dimensions of normative politics namely, history, philosophy, law and institution do not belong to the states of the eastern part of the world, nor the socio-political, economic and cultural scenario and perspective of the non-western underdeveloped states are taken into account by the great political thinkers done so much without transcending the limit to conservatism and ethno-centrism.

### 6.2.3 Relevance of Normative Approach to Political Science

It is the empiricists who grew since the first decade of the twentieth century who have posed a formidable challenge against the normative tradition of political science. But the importance of the normative approach to political science is over-riding; the denial of this approach is tantamount to the very denial of the study of politics. None can oppose the fact that we study politics to gather knowledge and this knowledge is used for ushering a good life for all of us. Normative political science knowledge does possess an action orientation. Value-based politics has contributed much to constitute the assertive political attitude of man through ages, taught us to become aware of the pitfalls and drawbacks of different political processes, political systems and political ideologies. Enormous literature given by the normative political thinkers and theorists constitutes the foundation of modern civilization, modern way of life and also they have been the sources of ideas and knowledge with which men have changed political reality whenever they felt needed or have maintained social and political equilibrium. Traditional political thought drawn along norms and values carries significant bearing upon solving the crisis of modern states and political life of the nations. It also acts as a key to understand where the problem lies and how it can be solved. Harold Lasswell, despite his strong advocacy for the behavioural science of politics, sought to direct efforts for providing the knowledge relevant to improve the practice of democracy. The empiricists' persistent urge for and dogged devotion to scientism received a serious blow when a series of new political developments or crises like urban riot, civil rights movement, environmental pollution and serial assassination of some world leaders had violently shaken the floor of western politics in the later half of the twentieth century. In this backdrop, David Easton came forward to speak for the 'Credo of Relevance' as the basic principle of 'post-behavioural revolution' in political science, asking both the scholars and the commoners to devote themselves to generate knowledge relevant to solving the actual problem of both micro and macro political life in the second edition of his 'Political System'.

It is now to conclude aptly noting that no discussion, explanation, analysis in and scholarly investigation into philosophy and science is inseparable from purpose and, for this reason, value-neutral. What we call objective reality is essentially but the objectified frame of value. Even a bubble in the realm of society and politics does have its significant social and political import which requires cultivation and application of sensible, critical and creative mind to understand and interpret, rather than bare techniques of objective research as exalted by the early positivists.

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## 6.3 Historical Approach

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Historical approach is one of the important components of traditional approach to the study of political science. Political science deals with various subjects like state, law, institutions, ideologies, governmental systems which have their roots in history. History is the store-house of facts and events which are relevant to understand how did state come into existence, how various states were governed in various parts of the world, how the present content and nature of law, both civil and criminal, were built, how democracy did function in the Greek city states and how modern democracy came out of the monarchical regime in Europe, how did the states and their interests interact to grow inter-state confederation and international body, how did capitalism over-power feudalism and revolutionize production and then capture power to dominate market, both local and global, and also how and under what social, economic and political condition people did rise to overthrow exploitative regime and expand freedom for mankind. Political science has to depend upon history for getting information on any of the above subjects requiring serious analysis, explanation and illumination. And this particular requirement or set of requirements reasonably lead us to become less obsessive to recognize the relative truth implicit in Seeley when he says that political science without history has no root.

G. H. Sabine is of opinion that basic theories in political science can not be discussed without reference to history. He strongly contends that if political theory has a universal and respectable character, its reason should be traced in the affirmation that it is rooted in historical traditions. Almost in the same direction, Michael Oakshott observes that what we want to inquire into politics is the huge oscillation and elasticity in the growth of political tradition that relates to the systems of human behaviour and human actions which are varied and dynamic indeed.

History is the record of the past events. It carries various accounts of how a biological person is transformed into a socio-political being imbued with culture and ability to distinguish between good and evil. The evolutionary roots of human socio-political identity and of human socio-political system are embedded in history. Development of ideas and change in them are also there in interpretations, comments and explanations made by the historians. The information implicit in biographies, autobiographies, travelogues, memoirs, commentaries and letters of the historians and historical figures act as the important primary source for the scholars in political science, who are working on themes even of significant present-day implications.

Political thinkers and theorists like Plato, Hobbes, Hegel, Montesquieu, Seeley, Henry Maine, Freeman, Laski, MacIver heavily depended on history while propounding their ideas on various aspects of politics. Sir Ivor Jennings, Robert Mackenzi, G. B. Mackintosh, Samuel Bear and many other theorists and commentators had produced significant works in the domain of political science deriving several information from the documents of history. For this reason, W.A. Dunning rightly observes that political theory is a historical record of the conditions and effects of political ideas.

History is not only important for classical political theory, it substantially constitutes the base of fundamental research in politics. Even for both qualitative and quantitative research fashionable and common in the present day, scholars have to enter into history for relevant facts and information. Zimmern is of opinion that it is contact with the past that equips men and community for the tasks of the present, and the more bewildering the present, the greater the accumulation of material goods and material cares, the greater the need for inspiration and refreshment from the past. History does share its information with the scholars in political science, it orients them to find out the cause-effect relationships among various variables. It embodies laws of historical development and these laws are largely helpful to direct the researchers particularly in political science to formulate their respective research design and draw research deductions.

One of the most important characteristic features of historical approach is that it lays emphasis on inductive methodology. An inductive method establishes general truth by observation, experiment or reasoning from particular examples. History is essentially based on facts. The historical approach is regarded as a form of the experimental approach. In a systematic manner it gathers knowledge or builds historical laws on the basis of facts. Historical knowledge and historical laws are helpful for understanding the current pattern of functioning of various state and non-state institutions and organizations, their very nature, and also the future growth and development of institutions and organizations which are right now beset with burgeoning problems coming from social economic, political, cultural and environmental fronts. R.N. Gilchrist points out that history not only explains political institutions, but it helps us to make deductions for future guidance.

So history provides a value framework also for men in political science. The study of history admonishes a ruler against committing wrong in public interest. This study again, substantially directs the scholar in political science what to select as a research topic for fulfilling the social purpose of research. We must have to admit that the historians have made history of political life of man. They have made

available the valuable resources of society, polity and culture for the entire human race. We know from history about what had been our past, how we have arrived at present and what future is staying for us. It is history which brings the three together, throws light on them and speaks for and against them and whatever it speaks expands the map of human knowledge and cognition which are the key to enhance freedom and to place the human community in a higher state of development.

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## **6.4 Criticism of Historical Approach**

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Although history carries tremendous significance for political theory and political science, it has been subjected to several points of criticism advanced by scholars like Sidgwick, James Bryce, Ernest Barker and David Easton.

The critics are of opinion that historical approach is descriptive and not it is analytical. The historians tend to describe past events without going into the inner content of them with an analytical bent of mind ; and, as a result of it, the interplay of forces behind the historical events are left mysterious having no first hand significant meaning for an intelligent mind.

Secondly, historical approach is limited and narrow in both scope and outlook. In most cases, political history is confined to the discussion of important past events, royal dynasties and renowned personalities. History seldom carries the stories of the common people, the struggles and revolts of the subalterns who really constitute history. Allan R. Ball opines that many a description of the older days are often partial or far from being complete and they do not provide full picture of the nature and characteristics of the time, place and circumstances relevant to the students of political science. So comprehensive and total analysis of political phenomena upon which researchers of political science work is not possible with the help of historical approach.

Thirdly, there is no denying the fact that all historical accounts are reliable and true to facts. Many a time adequate care and caution are not consciously taken on the part of some historians while evaluating evidence and facts. They may be influenced by fabricated data and manufactured information. Historical accounts thus grown are misleading and dangerous particularly for young scholars who are yet to gather prudence and erudition. James Bryce observes that historical parallels may sometimes be illuminating, but they are also misleading in most of the cases if historians happen to be less careful and cautious while gathering facts and presenting historical narratives based on them.

Fourthly, historical approach is not always able to provide universal explanation of events that took place in history because of the fact that the presenters of history may hold mutually different outlooks made up of mutually different value systems and attitudes to understanding things around them. As the historians explain and interpret history from their own individual standpoint, there remains a variety of history on the same event. Marx viewed the 1857 happening in the history of India as the first war of Indian independence while it appeared before the colonial historians as a big rebellion perpetrated against the civilizing force then at work in India under British rule.

Fifthly, individual bias of the historians for certain fixed notions, interests, ideas and ideologies retards the progress of scientific temper and creates a hegemonic atmosphere where men can not think and act freely to evolve and strengthen a democratic social order based on justice, equality and freedom. It is a very big problem of historical approach. As David Easton contends that historical ideas are parasitic and may cast a veil of control upon empirical research. Only a few historians are found sincere in collecting data and impartial in interpreting them. Sir Ivor Jennings is known for his broadness of outlook and impartiality of treatment. His authority on British constitution and various aspects of British Government is widely recognized and regarded as authentic. Similarly, the study of the party system by Robert Mackenzie and that of the cabinet system of England by J. B. Mackintosh are taken with high academic esteem as their works reflect a liberal and impartial exercise in their respective research and investigation. In this context, however, it is important to note that in respect of composing institutional history bias-neutrality on the part of the historians is rather possible and easy to maintain, but it is too difficult to do so in the sphere where the law of socio-political change and development or how history of human kind does advance require interpretation from the historians. So the question and doubt concerning the bias of the historians persists and it adversely matters in respect of evolving an impartial and objective history.

Karl Popper has described historical approach as 'historicism'. Historicism at present involves several schools each of which involves different outlook and different sets of characteristics and parameters on the basis of which historical events are explained, interpreted and judged. Popper is of opinion that historicism leads to a sort of historical determinism which does entail the traits of totalitarianism. Historical determinism involving totalitarian character if gets room in explanation and interpretation of facts and events of the past truth as inherent in historical facts and events gets away or is thrown into prison.

Despite all these scathing criticisms against historical approach to the study of political phenomena, we can not however deny the significance of it as a good number of representative political theorists had received inspiration from history while theorizing on key issues of political science.

Although the students and scholars of each discipline today are aware of the autonomous identity of their respective discipline they tend to study their respective phenomena from the perspective of multi-disciplinary frame of reference for the purpose of having holistic interpretation of things under study. From this point of view, history substantially helps the scholars of political science to make a broad canvas where they draw the picture of their subject-matter broadly and elaborate ideas. But what is imperative upon them is that they have to become cautious about the personal bias and evil purpose of some of the historians. They have to avoid oversimplification inherent in the statement of Edward Augustus Freeman who observes that history is past politics, politics is present history. They are also to remember that apart from history political science has many a root and that political science has many a thing giving birth to new generation of historians who have rewritten history and discovered new historical laws and new historical truth. It is true that narratives in political science have acquired the status of theory many a time after having been substantiated and verified by historical data. But it is also a fact that many historical accounts have been reconstructed to bring out the significance of various events in the light of political theory. Academic inter-dependence and reciprocity between history and political science is on rising today and it results in recent proliferation of new and new quality researches in both fields of study.

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## 6.5 Summing Up

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- Normative approach to political science is concerned with the ethical and value aspect of the questions and issues under political study. It is prescriptive in nature and based on deductive reasoning. Philosophical, institutional and legal studies of political phenomena are closely associated with normative approach.
- Political thinkers and theorists from the days of Plato and Aristotle have made a long tradition of normative political science which has faced a challenge as empirical approach to political science grew under pressure of the positivist wave in social science in the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century.



- Despite several criticisms against normative approach to political theory and political science, the fundamental emphasis upon the fundamental objective and purpose of theorizing on the various issues of politics as stressed by this approach can not be denied. Many contemporary political theorists like Leo Struss, Isaiah Berlin, Hannah Arendt, Michael Oakeshott, John Rawls, etc., have all reestablished the importance of moral, ethical and purposive dimension of political study.
- Historical approach belongs to the traditional approach to political theory. Historical approach is followed by a good number of political theorists who have tried to discover laws and rules of social and political development of human civilization.
- As History is based on facts, historical approach emphasizes inductive generalization. On the basis of factual generalization of historical events, political theorists build theories for the present and make prediction for the future on the basis of experience and evidence derived from history.
- Historical approach does have some serious limitations. Historical approach is descriptive and it is not analytical. Apart from it, the bias and prejudice of some historians may be fatal for those who are not sufficiently cautious while using the resource of history.

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## 6.6 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. What are the features of normative approach to political theory?
2. Make a critical analysis of the normative approach to political theory?
3. What are the characteristics of the historical approach to political science?
4. Make a critical estimate of the historical approach to political science.

### Long Questions :

1. Point out the limitations of normative approach of political science?
2. Attempt an overview of the historical approach to political science?

### Short Questions :

1. What is the difference between approach and method?

2. Do you find any relevance of normative approach in political theory? Argue your case.
3. What, according to you, are the limitations of historical approach to political science?

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## 6.7 Further Reading

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## **Unit 7 □ Empirical Approach to Political Theory**

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### **Structure**

#### **7.0 Objective**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

#### **7.2 Evolution and Development of Empiricism**

#### **7.3 Basic Postulates of Empirical Approach**

#### **7.4 Characteristics of Empirical Approach**

#### **7.5 Limitations and shortcoming of Empirical Approach**

#### **7.6 Summing Up**

#### **7.7 Probable Questions**

#### **7.8 Further Reading**

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### **7.0 Objective**

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After studying the materials of this unit the learners will understand

- what empirical approach means
- the characteristics of empirical approach
- the limitations and shortcoming of empirical approach

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### **7.1 Introduction**

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Empirical approach to political analysis claims to become characterized by an attempt to offer a dispassionate and impartial account of political reality. The empiricists seek to proceed with the assumption that experience gathered through human sense organs is the basis of knowledge. Experience is an attempt and a conscious process of thinking about real problems of political life of individuals and their political society exists at both micro and macro levels. On the basis of experience and thinking of real life situations of the political role-players and of the functioning of their organizations and institutions the empiricists claim that they gather objective and reliable political science knowledge.

Vernon van Dyke is of opinion that empiricism does not study organizations, institutions, laws, political processes, political activities and other issues of politics as they 'ought to be', on the contrary, it focuses on these aspects and issues of politics as they actually are. According to Robert Dahl, political scientist following empirical approach is concerned with 'what is' rather than with 'what ought to be'. So empirical approach is not concerned with the moral and ethical dimension of things political. It is rather concerned with building of value-free scientific political theories through inductive method that emphasizes observation and experiment of facts. For the purpose of making political theories objective and scientific, empirical approach asks the researchers to give up values and preconceived ideas and prejudices and devote them to collection of facts through sample survey, analysis of facts through statistical method and formulation of general statement after validating hypothesis. This general statement is scientific statement which is verifiable. The empiricist contends that verifiable scientific knowledge based on the analysis of facts is the real pragmatic knowledge. This knowledge is used to make decision and formulate policies of organization to run effectively and efficiently, and it guides behaviour and activities of the people in real political life situation.

It is not right to state that traditional political theory is not altogether devoid of the marks of empiricism. The political thoughts of Aristotle, Hobbes, Machiavelli and Montesquieu in particular, were to a significant extent, based on the practical experience gathered from the then political situation as prevailed at home or in their neighbouring countries. Aristotle's scheme of classification of government, Hobbesian view of human nature, Machiavelli's doctrine of statecraft and sociological interpretation of government and law of Montesquieu are all based on facts and experience gathered from the prevalent political situation and political crises besetting the states and political life of people of their time. So traditional political science as a whole was not completely indifferent to the practical aspects of politics. But a common belief goes in that traditional thinking was predominantly devoted to philosophical inquiry and presentation of the value-loaded views and understanding of the theorists belonging to traditional political theory and traditional political science.

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## **7.2 Evolution and Development of Empiricism**

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Empiricism, as such, as a stream of thinking evolved with John Locke and David Hume in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The underlying idea of empiricism is that the basis of scientific knowledge is observation through sense-experience. The empirical statement is concerned with the knowledge of a fact and a fact is concerned

with 'is' and not with 'ought to be' questions. The ought-to-be-questions are concerned with values, ideals and morals which are not factual and verifiable. Empiricism lays emphasis on the value-neutral, impartial and unprejudiced description of objective reality. This description is logical, pragmatic and scientific the validity of which can be verified and reestablished whenever and whenever it is required.

It is positivism of Auguste Comte, a French sociologist who subsumed all the trends of empiricism into its fold in the nineteenth century. Comte asked the social science theorist to follow strictly the methods of the natural science in order to build true knowledge. He sought to create social physics instead of social and political thinking to base on speculative metaphysics which, according to him, is but pre-scientific forms of thought. He holds that empirical knowledge acquired through rigorous observation and experiment is the key to the genuine inquiry in the field of social sciences.

The impact of positivism in social science loomed large since the very beginning of the twentieth century. Max Weber, however, qualified Comte's positivism and promoted 'neo-positivism' which is akin to 'logical positivism'. Weber did extol science but not at the cost of ethics and morality. He held the view that scientific method is the only key to obtain the knowledge of facts. It is empirical analysis which can uncover truth and discover knowledge implicit in issues, events and problems in social sciences, and this truth and knowledge is scientific as they are verifiable. Scientific method, however, can not be applied, as the logical positivists point out, to the analysis and understanding of values and to test their validity. Logical positivists are of opinion that factual and objective knowledge gathered through sense-experience constitutes the core of science which together cause to make logic that builds empirical theory.

In lieu of institutional, legal and moral tradition of political theory and political analysis, two books viz. *Human Nature in Politics* by Graham Wallas of England and *The Process of Government* by Arthur Bentley of the United States of America, both published in 1908, had set a new tradition in the sphere of thinking and analysing of political phenomena. Wallas laid emphasis on human nature and behaviour of human beings while Arthur Bentley had his focus on the governmental process as influenced by inter-group-relations and activities of several groups. In their discussion the informal aspects of politics, so far neglected, took precedence over formal aspects like law, constitution, institution and organization. Wallase brought before us the inter-play in operation between human nature and shaping of politics not always concerned with formal politics as such. The chemistry between man's nature and

politics and the vice versa are very important to understand and Wallase had done it and gave it to ourselves so as to consider politics no longer a dull study of state and constitution. Wallase is of opinion that politics is a rational and logical activity upon which the influence and impact of human feeling, habit, intention and orientation are as important as politics is on making the new components of and changing the content of human nature.

Arthur Bentley, in his work, holds the view that the inputs and impacts of politics are lied in human activities that are reflected in the processes of government. According to him, human activities can be understood and explained by theory and facts and these facts can be measured and quantified. As he contends, human political activities denotes the activities of varions groups working on the basis of competing interests they have towards others. Group activities reflect the behaviour of the group members who are guided by their own will and intention be they nagative or positive and short-term or far-reaching. In this way, both Graham Wallase and Arthur Bentley had laid the foundation of empiricism quiet formidably in political science in the year 1908.

The empirical political analysis as initiated most prominently by Graham Wallace and Arthur Bentley gained momentum in the effort of a group of American research scholars who had worked under the most effective leadership of Charles K. Merriam who was the founder of Chicago School. Alongwith his associates and deciples, Merriam built a new model of political science which was resulted from the conscions application of the methods of science. Merriam in his 'New Aspects in Politics', laid emphasis on the systematic use of statistical method to measure and quantify the psychological components involved into the behaviours and action of the persons who perform political role or roles in actual reality.

According to Merriam, politics is action-oriented and it reflects the behaviour of man which can be described systematically and hence scientifically with the help of the application of scientific methods. In the growth of empiricism in politics, Charles Merriam was an important personality because he felt it imperative to make a strong link between political science and empirical research and he brought into the domain of research in political science the ideas and items which were so far regarded as unnecessary and irrelevant. Merriam strongly believed that political scientists imbued with empirical orientation must focus on the mental and the psychological trends and components that govern and are become evident in the behaviour of the political role-players. These, according to him, constitute also the political personality of the individuals who actually run the political organizations and act in those organization to serve purpose they hold.

In the twenties of the twentieth century George G. E.G. Catlin, Frank Kent and Stuart A. Rice had made tremendous effort to advance the need for orienting political analysis and research along empirical dispensation. In his 'The Science and Methods in Politics', G.E.G. Catlin highlighted on the path of development of the science of politics and purposeful research. Stuart Rice in his Quantitative Methods in Political Science had identified the distinction between science and philosophy. He expressed his indignation for the social science theorists who attempted to conceptualize and establish a science of moral purpose which is not at all the subject to scientific study and investigation. Both Pareto and Mosca who had their continental European influence upon American empiricists strongly advocated the cause of objective research in social science through their analysis of the elite and of the processes of consensus and dissent.

In the development of "qualitative empiricism" in political science Harold D. Lasswell is a very big name and, according to Heinz Eulau, his influence was pervasive as he introduced new behavioural trend not in the light of crude empiricism as derived from Comte's positivism. In his "Politics: Who Gets What, When and How" he insisted on the indispensability of scientific methodology but he refused the insistence of value-neutrality. He is of opinion that science can not judge the validity of values but it can judge the impacts of values on social and political activities. As Harold Laswell was a policy scientist for a democratic society his empiricism and scheme of scientific inquiry did not negate the relevance of purpose of the scientist had in his mind before his effort was to start. He contends that scientific description is necessary because the analysis of value can not always provide a satisfactory and reliable answer to who gets what when and how.

In the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century, the establishment and consolidation of behavioural revolution in the United States in particular, strengthened the empirical tradition of political analysis and research. The empirical political theorists of Chicago, Michigan, Princeton and Stanford Universities had been a dominant force in the domain of political science research under the pressure of the influence of behaviouralism.

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### **7.3 Basic Postulates of Empirical Approach**

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Empirical approach to the study and research of the subject-matter of political science indicates the following basic postulates.

- (a) Greater emphasis on factual background of the subjects under study and research rather than on focussing only on structure, institution and ideology.
- (b) Discussion and explanation of political phenomena in the multi-disciplinary

context composed of sociology, psychology, economics and other related disciplines.

- (c) Verification and validation of the basic idea and induction that guide political analysis and discussion.
- (d) Reciprocal relationship and inter-dependence between theory and research.
- (e) Value-neutral commitment to the study and discussion of political phenomena.
- (f) Reliance on scientific method in the generation of reliable, objective and scientific knowledge required as an input for governing institutions and organizing political activities.

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## **7.4 Characteristics of Empirical Approach**

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On the basis of the foregoing discussion we can sort out the basic characteristics of empirical approach to political study in the following way.

First of all, empirical approach focuses on actual facts. Empirical political scientists search out facts relevant to the respective political issues and events under study and discussion. Facts are the basic input to building of theory which is the decisive objective of empirical project of the political scientists. The researchers take conscious and continuous effort in collection of facts and fact-analysis and for this purpose they rely on and apply the statistical methods.

Secondly, the empirical political theorists insistently try to find out causal relationship in the process of analysis of relevant facts and on its basis they build causal theory. This causal theory indicates general laws and rules relating to the problems or issues upon which discussion or research is held. David Easton holds the view that causal theory is a device for improving the dependability of our knowledge.

Thirdly, for systematic, objective and scientific theory building empirical political analysis stresses on inductive method. Political scientists are very much cautious conscious in the collection of relevant data and they analyse each of those minutely to find out its value and relevance in view of the basic proposition and intent of the research project. As inductive method is opposed to deductive reasoning, there is no scope of speculation and abstraction in the sphere of empirical discussion and investigation. Reason in empirical analysis is grown out of real life situation and hence, it does not require deep imagination and abstract thinking.

Fourthly, empirical approach lays significant emphasis on building of empirical political theory on the basis of empirical research. Empirical research is carried through scientific methodology emphasizing observation and experiment. Empirical



political theory that relies on observation and experiment is descriptive. It describes in clear terms the facts that are observed and give rise to theory.

Fifthly, the main focus of empirical approach is not the law or constitution, institution or organization, nor the ideology and big philosophical issues concerning state and man's political destiny. Rather, the observable behaviour of political actor or group of actors and his/its political activities are the main points of inquiry for the empirical analyst. Empirical political theory is the result of description and scientific analysis of individual and/or group behaviour and individual and/or group activities held in the real world of politics.

Sixthly, empirical political theory is objective and focuses on the observable behaviour and activities of individual and group as the main objects of attention. For this reason in particular, values and moral or ethical consideration have no scope to penetrate into the sphere of empirical discussion and inquiry. The champions of empiricism guided particularly by positivism ask the researchers to banish values in order to get their study objective and true to the spirit of scientificism. Value-neutrality and refusal of moral and ethical standard from the domain of discussion and research on politics are regarded as a very important attribute of empirical approach.

Seventhly, empirical approach requires and guides the political analysts to become oriented to multi-disciplinary study of political phenomena. Graham Wallase had long laid emphasis on the psychological dimension of politics. In his 'New Aspects of Politics', Charles Merriam advised the students of politics to make full use of the recent advances in social sciences particularly in psychology, sociology and economics for the purpose of developing inter-disciplinary and scientific rigour of political science. Inter-disciplinary orientation helps the political reserchers get a broad spectrum of his subject-matter and on consideration of varions aspects and dimension he could build statement of holistic importance, which is more acceptable and useful as it is more purposive.

Eightly, the objective of empirical approach is to develop scientific discussion and research on human behaviours and human activities relying on scientific methods of observation and experiment. Man, instead of institution, law or constitution, is placed at the centre of attention On the basis of rigorous scientific inquiry and investigation empirical political science seeks to develop a stock of political science knowledge which may come to improve the condition of actual political life of human being.

Empirical approach to political study and research has created tremendous academic sensation among the students and scholars of political science. No doubt it has led to the proliferation of various angles for analysis of various and growing

aspects of politics both domestic and international, and, as a result of it, many theories and approaches like behaviouralism, system theory, communication theory, structural-functional theory, game theory, etc. have evolved to make political science a more vibrant, dynamic and a very relevant and useful problem-solving discipline in the present time.

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## **7.5 Limitations and Shortcoming of Empirical Approach**

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Tremendous impact and contribution notwithstanding, the empirical approach involves some serious problems and shortcoming about which we have to become alert and conscious while using or applying this approach to understand and explain or analyse politics. Critics like Leo Strauss, Leslie Lipson, Gunnar Myrdal, Alfred Cobban, Karl Manheim and many others have raised the following objections against empirical approach to the study of politics.

First of all, methodology of natural science and/or the techniques of statistics can not always be applied to the study of human behaviour and nature of man. Human behaviour and human nature consist of many and diverse socio-psychological components and pulls and pressure which are not always direct and discernible and, hence, they are not subject to rigorous quantification and measurement. Unpredictable behaviour and changing and highly erratic nature of man cause to happen political events which are often regarded unprecedented and altogether novel in character. Application of so-called scientific methods is possible in a rather stable situation which hardly exists in politics that is always in a state of flux. The research finding held on French revolution of 1789 is not verifiable as we can engineer another French revolution neither in France nor elsewhere in the world.

The critics are of opinion that fission and fusion lie in the content of political event which result from the will and intention and from behaviour of individual and group of individuals. So it would be an act of folly if we assume or try to discover homogeneity in the pattern of human behaviour and, for that matter, in the happening of political events or within the political issues besetting political life of individual or of group or of nation. From this point of view, empirical approach gives indulgence to conservatism and favours status quo. It defies and denies the ever-changing nature of human nature, human behaviour and that of politics as such. The highly publicised commitment if empirical approach to hyper-science has underestimated the great contribution of the great political philosophers and political scientists who enriched this discipline so long since Plato and Aristotle.

The critics also accuse that the empiricists guided by Comte intend to build

pseudo social science as distinct from social science concerning human being having emotion and instinct, aspiration and intention and natural ability to think and power to judge. The demand for scienticism as asserted by the empiricists is but a matter of pretention, they are theorists created out of a revelling positivist passion. They are mere model builders and in a clan of pseudo-scientists propagating neo-scholasticism and jargon. They have confined political science to number and to monotonous ritual grappled with methodological war-strategy-and-tactics. In this empirical regime this discipline becomes narrow, parochial and obsessed with craze of irrelevant scienticism.

The critics again attack the value-neutral commitment of empirical study of political phenomena that relate to human activities and human behaviour. They contend that value-free social science is a fundamental fallacy. Man is a political animal is a saying of Aristotle. It implies that man is a social creature having reasoning faculty. He has the power of judgement on the basis of which he can differentiate good from evil. He possesses the potential to alter or change his living conditions for a qualitatively better and just life full of virtue. Throughout ages man is on searching knowledge that could act as a key to material and moral improvement of human life. These propositions, however, are largely meaningless and irrelevant for empirical approach which advocates objective and scientific study of political life bereft of purpose and reference to more freedom, more equality, more rights and more justice for the people. Empiricism denies the fact that knowledge has a liberating role to play in human society. Man hankers after knowledge and truth for they liberate man from hunger, illiteracy, disease, unemployment and exploitation of man by man on the one hand, and obscurantism, bigotry, intolerance and fundamentalism on the other. Value-free discussion as emphasized by empiricism does not address these issues of human existence and human condition and thus it becomes parasitic. It retards imagination and creativity which the students need to have for using politics as an instrument of change. Empiricism does oppose change and believe in the reason of conservation and this reason, in fact, constitutes the hidden agenda and the ideology of empiricism.

The critics also expressed the view that persistent demand for inter-disciplinary focus as required by the empiricists, has been injurious to autonomous disciplinary identity of political science. The different disciplinary perspectives and concepts, ideas, models, information and facts derived from disciplines such as economics, sociology, psychology etc., have unnecessarily made political science encumbered, got its discussion irrelevant and wearisome. The critics point out that over-dependence upon other disciplines has circumscribed the autonomy of political science and got it down from the status of 'master science' that Aristotle, the father of political science, had ascribed to.

Some critics have again argued that empiricism stands for value-relativism, hyperfactualism, non-ideological reductionism and positivization of social sciences inclusive of political science. All these attributes of empiricism led political theory to its natural decline in the late fifties and sixties of the twentieth century. It was only a small but epistemologically rich group consisting of thinkers and theorists like Michael Oakeshott, Hannah Arendt, Bextrand de Jouvenal, Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin and a few other had reestablished the link between philosophy and science, rejected the totalitarian notion of dead uniformity and homogeneity in respect of human behaviour, restored the potentiality of politics as a creative activity that change human condition and human existence for the better. The reinstatement in values, reciprocity between philosophizing faculty and scientific methodology, role of politics in society and culture change as emphasized by these theorists had caused to revival of political theory in the later days.

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## 7.6 Summing Up

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- In this unit empirical approach to the study of political science is discussed and explained. Empirical approach is opposed to normative approach. It lays emphasis on factual knowledge based on sense-experience. Observation and experiment and application of statistical methods along positivist social science dispensation are stressed for the study of human behaviour and human activities which are considered as the central focus of attention in the place of institution and constitution. Empirical political approach is primarily oriented to build objective and scientific theory on the basis of objective and scientific research and, hence, it asks the researchers to shun values and to acquire a value-neutral attitude in the whole process of doing research and building value-free objective political theory. Empirical approach also endorses inter-disciplinary perspective of political discussion and explanation.
- Empirical approach, although useful in research and study of some areas of politics, has been criticized severely by some critics for its excessive craze for scienticism and banishment of values from the field of research and study of human behaviour and human action in particular.

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## 7.7 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Discuss the characteristics of empirical approach to the study of political science.

2. What are the limitations of empirical approach to the study of political science.
3. Critically discuss the empirical approach to the study of political science.

**Long Questions :**

1. Trace the evolution and development of empiricism.
2. Discuss the background and features, of the empirical approach to political sciences.

**Short Questions :**

1. What do you mean by empirical approach to political science?
2. What is the background force of empirical approach ?
3. Mention the basic postulates of empirical approach.

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**7.8 Further Reading**

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## **Unit 8 □ Feminist Perspective in Political Theory**

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### **Structure**

#### **8.0 Objective**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

#### **8.2 Growth of Feminism**

#### **8.3 Key Concepts in Feminism**

#### **8.4 Waves of Feminism**

#### **8.5 Typology of Feminism**

#### **8.6 Summing Up**

#### **8.7 Probable Questions**

#### **8.8 Further Reading**

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### **8.0 Objective**

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After studying the materials of this unit the learners will understand

- Meaning of Feminism,
- Development of the Feminist approach,
- Various concepts associated with Feminism,
- Types of Feminism

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### **8.1 Introduction**

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Feminism is a recent critical perspective in political theory. Feminism is, in fact a praxis combining both a theory built for the purpose of attaining equal rights for the women on the one hand and practice as exemplified in the movements of the feminists all over the world, that represent diverse experiences and peculiar context. Feminism is intrinsically associated with feminist movements and feminist movements are the result of the growth of feminism. Right consciousness or identity consciousness of the women is apparently prior to women's movement, but this consciousness is a

necessary outcome of the subjugated and suppressed socio-political condition the women were used to experience in course of their living.

The objective of feminism is to build a society free from gender discrimination. The exercise into feminist epistemology and feminist movements as such are basically oriented to assert and establish the personal identity of women. Feminism is no theory bereft of practical implications. It activates the consciousness of the women about their subordinate position and makes them aware of the fact that they are deprived of equality of opportunity in society because of their being women. The feminists champion the cause of change of patriarchal values and condition pertaining to society, economy, politics and culture that promote gender discrimination and sexual exploitation.

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## **8.2 Growth of Feminism**

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Feminism as a specific socio-political body of knowledge grew since the sixties of the twentieth century in Europe and in the United States of America. But as early as in 1700, Mary Astell wrote "Some Reflection upon Marriage". Astell, the first British feminist, was of opinion that women are no inferior to men and they have as much reason and rationality as men have. As both men and women are human being, both they are rational. Because of particular and peculiar upbringing, socialisation and training and also of customs and social practices as rife in male-dominated society, women are given a subservient or subordinate position and they are subjugated. She raised a very legitimate and pertinent question for the whole human race that if all men are born free, why women are born slave! Astell asked for right kind of upbringing, training and education for women so as to get them free and self-dependent.

Before the publication of 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women,' in 1792, the major work of Mary Wollstonecraft, Abigail Adams wrote in March, 1776 a historic letter to her husband John Adams who became the US President in 1797. Abigail in her letter strongly demanded education and property rights for the women. She mentioned in her letter that if the women are not paid particular care and attention, if they are not considered as the co-partner in the making of decision and if their voice and representation are denied in making laws, they will rise in rebellion. Abigail was averse to putting unlimited power in the hands of the husbands.

Wollstonecraft, in her work, raised first the main concerns of feminist critique against 'malestream' political theory. In opposition to the discriminatory projection on education advanced by Rousseau, she established the social role, rationality and claim for equal rights of the women. Wollstonecraft was the liberal feminist who

stressed the right to education, right to property and the right to participate in the process of politics. Some fifty years before the emergence of the female suffrage movement in Britain and in the United States of America, Wollstonecraft strongly advocated for the right to vote without which, she asserts, democracy remain incomplete. She criticizes the confinement of the women to the 'private sphere' and thus asked them to have connection with the 'public sphere'. She is of opinion that when a woman goes beyond the private sphere and participates in the activities in the public sphere and receives education she is placed in the status due to her as a person.

John Stuart Mill advocated the cause of the women's rights, and accordingly he is considered as one the champions of liberal feminism. He in his 'The Subjection of Women' (1869), considered lack of education, legal disparity, and political oppression as being the main causes for the slavery of the women in society. In this direction of socio-political thinking on the condition of women, Frances Wright, Sarah Grimke, Elizabeth Cady Staston, etc., expressed the view that in the interest of establishing women's freedom, of increasing their intellectual skill and of gaining equal rights for them, a significant social change is an imperative, which could ensure educational, property and voting rights for the women against the domination by religious and social customs, institutions and tradition of the male-dominated society. Liberal feminism, however, can not pose a formidable challenge against the ever-more formidable patriarchy or the patriarchal institutions. Without going beyond the limit of existing society and politics the liberal feminists did not demanded the equal rights for the women. But the strong beliefs for the women's rights, the classical feminists raised had their deep impacts upon the later feminists such as Betty Friedan, Radcliffe Richards, Susan Moller Okin who opined for building a state of affair under the active role and supervision of the state. This new condition, as these thinkers contend, will ensure well-being of the women by means of eradicating gender disparity of myriad forms.

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### **8.3 Key Concepts in Feminism**

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It is now important to discuss some general but significant concepts associated with all shades of feminism before we deal with other schools or forms of feminism. One such general concept is the concept of public-private divide. There is a common belief prevalent long in society is that men function in the public sphere while the general works and activities of the women happen in private sphere that is within the confine of their respective family. To go beyond the private sphere and work with others in the public sphere on the part of the women is a social and cultural taboo upon them and even punishable in some places and within some communities. It implies that in the realm of politics and administration that lies in the public sphere,



women are prohibited. They are permitted to work for her husband and offsprings and others in the family and to perform domestic duties within the private sphere. Private sphere is devoid of effective power with which the women have or should have no connection because any such connection is injurious to their being women and this particular beingness of the women is created by nature which has settled the public sphere only for the men.

Feminism does oppose these ideas and notions which are thought to be arbitrary, irrational and dangerous. The feminists argue that as marriage requires registration, birth control and entitlement of heirship are all determined by public policy and governmental laws and rules, the so called private sphere is not left out of control of the public sphere. So the practice of public-private divide has no rational basis and it is but an ill-conceived intrigue of the male designed to dominate over the women, resist them against their desire to get education, to have share of political power and become free from domestic violence and household drudgery. The feminists strongly hold the view that power and authority are very much basic to politics and for this reason, the so-called most personal sphere of the women is basically political where women are subservient to the male who exerts varied power over the women and seeks to acquire their unquestioned allegiance. Kate Millet, known as a radical feminist, observes in this respect that politics is obviously there where power-relation does exist. So 'personal is political'. Politics exists in the personal sphere where on the basis of power and authority the male rules the women for denying everything that necessitates the share of power and doing everything to the satisfaction of the male. It is important to note here that 'Personal is Political' was the trenchant slogan of the feminist movement in the sixties and seventies of the twentieth century. Public private divide is, indeed, a social and cultural construct and it is devoid of any rational basis.

Patriarchy is another important concept against which the feminists are very critical. Patriarchy literally means 'rule by the father'. In feminist analysis, it directly denotes the combination of power, authority and the absolute domination or hegemony of the male head of the household. Obtaining its legitimacy from the long-drawn customs and practices having its deep roots into the mind and body of man and society the husband-father subordinate his wife and children within the family. In society the male members receive and acquire the patriarchal mindset and power operating within the families, and, on the basis of it, they assume the hegemonic authority for total oppression and exploitation to which women are subjected. In patriarchal socio-political regime, women are subordinate and subservient to the male

both within and outside the family in the spheres of politics, economy and culture. Patriarchy is thus the key cause of female domination and exploitation. The female uses to experience every now and then the diverse implications of patriarchy both within family and in society. Patriarchy turns into an all-pervasive culture into which the female members of society in particular are inducted. The tentacles of patriarchy have a huge spread in educational institutions, religious organizations, sport bodies and elsewhere. They permeate bureaucracy, police, military, judiciary all belonging to state system.

As Sylvia Walby in her 'Theorizing Patriarchy' (1990) observes, patriarchy is a system of socio-political structures, socio-political values and socio-political practices, and in this system the male controls, oppresses and exploits the female. It is again an ideology which expresses the view that men are more powerful, productive and skilled than the women. It considers the latter as the property possessed by the former, and it rationalizes the predominating superiority of men over women. Because of the superior status of men as determined by patriarchy the premiere posts in politics and administration are concentrated in the hands of the men. It is again due to all existent and all-pervading patriarchy that the male child is discriminated against female child, female foetus is killed and legislation for reservation of seats in the deliberative body at the upper level fails recurrently to become a fact of political life. As Walby contends, forms of patriarchy are varied and their manifestations are different, deep and pervasive. It frightens the female both at home and in the sphere where they get education, work for livelihood, exhibit their talent, skill and ability as singer, dancer, writer or poet, or perform political role.

Sex and gender distinction is again another concept associated with feminist theorization. Patriarchy views that the role of the women in society is biologically determined. Biologically male and female are different from their very birth and hence their respective social roles are not similar but different. Patriarchy considers the females not as powerful physically as males are. Since this difference is unchanging, the females are confined to the structure of family which is their personal sphere where they fulfill the goal of perfect life performing domestic duties, bearing children and rearing them. The feminists attack this biological determinism as the most important source of male domination in society. Biological determinism creates an egoistic personality and an expression of masculine tyranny for the male with which they determine the do's and don'ts for the female. Simone de Beauvoir holds the view that one is not born but rather becomes a woman. A society ruled by patriarchy, artificially constructs the ideas, conditions, mores and customs relating to masculinity and femininity and these taken together give birth to gender ideology. This

gender ideology builds the socio-political image and identity specific to men and women and decides their respective space and respective roles. At the time when one is born, one is recognised simply as a baby, but it is society and the system based on patriarchy, the notion and characteristic or attribute of masculinity or femininity is imposed upon the baby. In the course of upbringing and living in society the baby becomes male having masculine gender or female having feminine gender. So gender is a social construct. It indicates whether one will rule and suppress or will be ruled and suppressed.

The concept of sexuality is also associated with the feminist critique. According to Sylvia Walby, sexual domination over the women in patriarchal society is definitely a sort of oppression. In this society, the male establishes their hegemony over the female through sexuality which also works as a semi-institution having its social recognition behind it. In several phases of feminist movement the notion of sexuality is differently defined and viewed. In the sixties of the twentieth century, sexuality was considered both as a source of pleasure reasonable and legitimate, and again as a danger against which awareness campaign was thought to be organized. In the seventies a group of feminists endorsed and ratified homosexuality or lesbianism in order to deliberately ignore the sex of the male because, as they hold, it dominates, suppresses and exploits the women. Homosexuality is not simply a means of sexual pleasure and gratification, according to this group of feminists; on the contrary, it is a protest against the men's effort to establish sexual supremacy upon the female. Porno movie or porno advertisement having exposure of female body is no nuisance, rather it signifies the assertion of women's freedom and women's rights, Wendy McElroy implies in her various works.

The idea of equality and difference is also a constitutive of the feminist perspective. Particularly the liberal feminists have required equality for the women to be established in society. In favour of women they demanded the absence of discrimination in the field of education, political representation, employment in public sphere, payment of wage, owning and inheritance of property and dispensation of legal justice. Equal rights for the women are essential for getting a woman a 'person'.

But a group of a feminist in the mid seventies of the twentieth century has given stress on difference instead of equality for the women. They contend that the women possess distinctive virtue because it is they who menstruate, bear and rear children, perform domestic works and serve the elders in their respective families. This virtue helps the women to have a distinct identity and a distinct space in society. These feminists are also of opinion that the women are not only a community distinct from the community of men, because of class and ethnic distinctiveness, all the members

belonging to women community as such are not equal. The feminist movements of the seventies of the previous century have raised with greater importance the individual characteristics and the separate and distinct identity specific to the women. This assertion of self-identity of the women posed a formidable challenge against male domination and it helped form association of the women themselves for holding debate and discussion on women's issues.

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## **8.4 Waves of Feminism**

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In all societies, East and West, the women are prey to dual domination. One is established by the prevailing society, culture, economy and politics and the other by the male members of the family and society. This dual domination is the source of the subservient position, the condition of being slave and loss of identity as a person the women suffer. In the last hundred and fifty years or more, many a feminist movement have been erupted in various parts of the world. In recorded history, the first feminist movement received its inspiration from Seneca Falls Convention held in July, 1848, which asserted that all men and women are created equal. The movement was essentially a suffrage movement which also covered the issues like social and institutional barriers that limited women's rights, a lack of educational and economic opportunities and absence of a voice in political debates. All these issues were discussed and debated in the Seneca Falls Convention. In this historical phase the women's citizenship issue was raised and in this particular phase, National Women Suffrage Association, Society for Promoting the Employment of Women came at the fore. This equal rights feminism of the forties and fifties and the initial assertions and attributes of early feminism belong to what is called the 'first wave feminism', which had been successful to move the people towards more radical and sometimes revolutionary expressions of feminism and feminist movement that constitute the broader context of the 'second wave feminism' started since sixties of the preceding century.

The second phase feminism or what is called the 'second-wave feminism' is distinct from the first phase or first wave feminism and is much more powerful than it. In fact, the contemporary students' movement, civil rights movement and national liberation movement held in several parts of the world were the main inspiration of the more articulate feminist movements took place in this phase. The feminist theorists and activists held patriarchy directly responsible for discrimination against and disregard of women. Some feminist activists point to sexual exploitation and sexual oppression as existent even in heterosexuality and, thus, they mark the men as natural enemy to women and support homosexuality as a protest against patriarchy.

In this phase it gets clear that through various institutions and social practices as prevalent in society such as marriage, sexual habit, domestic mores and customs, the male establishes their dominance over the female. In this context, the feminists felt it an imperative to build organizations for themselves to challenge this dominance on the one hand, and to grow awareness among the women in particular, about emancipation and freedom of the women on the other. In this phase, a few women's organizations were grown in the United States. Betty Friedan built National Organization of Women in this phase. In 1970, Carol Hanisch wrote a book under the title “The Personal is Political” and this title became the political argument and a rallying slogan of second-wave feminism.

The third phase feminism known also as the third-wave feminism was developed in the nineties of the twentieth century. It represents a combination of many and diverse theoretical trends derived from psychoanalysis, post-structuralism, post-modernism and postcolonialism. Hence third-wave feminism turns from the theoretical conceptualization powered by practical experiences into a developing discourse consisting of basic content of the problem alongwith its varied ramifications. Third-wave feminism is thus broadly regarded as Post-feminism developed by Camille Paglia, Patrick Califia, Natasha Walter, etc. Post-feminism is global in its nature and outlook; and it is not confined to white-centric and middle-class-centric feminism only. Post-feminism rejects 'victim feminism' and glorifies 'power feminism'. It boldly approves sexual exposure of the young lady for the purpose of using it as a weapon to fight against domination of the male over the female. The feminists of this phase find no vice in the fashion-show or beauty-contest programmes of the women, rather they are in favour of promotion of all these events and programmes because, as they think, these programmes signify freedom of women and an alternative construction against the construction that induces the male to suppress and exploit the female.

Feminists like Germaine Greer of Australia and Susan Faludi of the United States are, however, critical on some points of post-feminist arguments. Greer disapproves the celebration of women's sex in print and electronic media as it makes, she observes, the women into an exchangeable commodity in the market.

But the importance of post-feminist projection is not denied. Because it is widely considered as a continuation of the feminist thoughts and movements of the preceding days. Post-feminism is multi-dimensional and it addresses the feminist issues of the Afro-Asian and Latin American women who live under much more difficult condition and suffer multiple subjugation and exploitation because of backwardness engulfing their state, society, politics and culture.

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## 8.5 Typology of Feminism

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In the earlier part of this discussion we have dealt with liberal view of feminism. Avoiding repetitive discussion on liberal feminism we now concentrate on Marxist and socialist types of feminism for discussion and exploration. What is noteworthy in this context, however is that although both Marxist and socialist feminisms are taken interchangeably and although both these two variants receive their inspiration from the Marxist philosophy, both are not similar.

"The Origin of the Family, Private Property and State" written by Friedrich Engels is the main source of Marxist feminism. According to Engels, the subordinate position of the women is not natural, but it grew in a particular stage of development of production system. As Engels observes, the dominance and authority of the male is developed to ensure the inheritance of private ownership of the means of production which was developed in the process of production at a particular stage. The women are placed within the confine of respective family where they perform domestic functions and bear and rear children. Introducing monogamy for them, control is imposed upon their sexuality and thus they come under the tutelage of patriarchy. The women engaged in domestic labour are estranged from the process of social production as they have no direct contribution to it and, thus, they become completely dependent upon the male members of their families. Engels is of opinion that the women, under capitalism, are the regular provider of healthy and sound male labourers that are required by the owners of the capitalist production units to produce goods and services. In case of emergency appeared in production system, the women's labour power is used at a very low wage-rate.

So, the Marxists are of opinion that the institution of private property is responsible for the inferior and subjugated position of the women in society. The discriminatory relation between the male and female is one of the many expressions of class relation as exists in a society based on private ownership of the means of production. The Marxists strongly believe that with the abolition of the institution of private property, the women will be emancipated and become free. So freedom of the women is contingent upon abolition of capitalism and building of socialism.

Socialist feminism like Marxist feminism is based on the Marxist theory. But it throws light on the subjects Marxist feminism does not incorporate. Socialist feminism lays stress on gender discrimination while class discrimination received greater attention by the Marxist feminists. The socialist feminists opine that patriarchy is much more deep and penetrative than an exploitative social system. Patriarchy is

not necessarily connected with the institution of private property and, hence, abolition of private property does not put an end to patriarchy. The Marxist feminists do not pay much attention to family, domestic labour and to matter like reproduction, which are important concepts in feminist analysis.

Socialist feminist Zillah Eisenstein observes that male domination and capitalism are the two central constituents of exploitation of the women. According to Eisenstein, sexism and gendered division of labour is determined by the prevailing exploitative economic system. So the liberation of women depends upon (a) the simultaneous abolition of both the economic and 'cultural' sources of women's oppression, and (b) building of a society that ensures social, economic and political justice. Juliet Michell is of the view that the location of the women in society is determined by production, reproduction, socialization and sexuality. So women's liberation does not depend solely on dismantling of capitalism, rather it requires the abolition of all the determinants that get women subjugated and subjected.

Radical feminism, however, is evolved to challenge all the variants of feminism. Unlike liberal feminists, radical feminists do not consider patriarchy as being a natural institution. In contravention of the argument of the Marxist feminists, the radical feminists contend that gender-conflict is the main and the predominant conflict in society and biological and psychological difference or distinction is the source of the discrimination between the male and the female. Patriarchy is built upon gender-division which is responsible for the bondage of the women, and this gender-division empowers and invigourates patriarchy. The dominating biological structure of the male that terrifies and control the women, is derived from patriarchy. Patriarchy, according to the radical feminists, is thus both an institution and an ideology. It gets the women as the subjects ruled by the male.

"The Second Sex" of Simone de Beauvoir is the main source and inspiration of radical feminism. Simone holds that the on-going general processes of society have held the women as an "other" group. Because of physical form, reproduction and child rearing the female is 'other' in the eyes of society, they play in 'other' role in society. This 'otherness' restricts the freedom of the women and as a result of it, they cannot express and expose power they have in them. Simone urges the abolition of the processes, norms, mores and values that compel the women to become the 'other' or to become the 'second sex'. Boldly she asserts, 'one is not born but becomes a woman'.

According to Shulamith Firestone, another radical feminist, human reproductive biology is responsible for considering women the weaker sex. The prevailing norms and social values work behind the reproductive biology compel the lactating mother

to feed the dependent babies and in turn the mother becomes dependent on her husband. So liberation of women requires a holistic effort which involves both objective and subjective dimensions.

Kate Millet, a very articulate and powerful radical feminist, observes in her 'Sexual Politics' that power exists in relation between man and woman and because of it the relation is political. A male person derives power from the institution of patriarchy and on the basis of it he subordinates women in family and in society. So both the spheres, private and public, are political. Because of politics the women are kept confined to their respective family and they are denied access to public sphere so as to deprive them of any share of political power. And again, it is because of politics that men are allowed to public space to appropriate power existent there. Millet is of opinion that state normally can not resist this politics as determined by patriarchy which dominates women at home and in society and state because it is ubiquitous. The radical feminists, the non-believers in reform, thus call for world wide female solidarity and sisterhood in order to build organized resistance against this all-pervading patriarchy.

Rather a more recent theme, called postmodern feminism is developed by Judith Butler, Elizabeth Spelman, Julia Kristeva and others. Postmodern feminism is grown out of a combined theoretical forces of structuralism, postmodernism and French feminism. The post-modern feminists are of opinion that the women have many identities other than gender. The conditions and problems of them are not similar irrespective of caste, class, colour, religion and region. All Asian women, all black women, all Hindu or all Muslim women of India are different and they experience things differently. Post-modern feminists, therefore, reject the broad-narrative or the meta-narrative of feminism and draw our attention to the difference within as exists in the central core of the problem and also to the many, diverse, fragmented and micro expressions and experiences of the women who belong to no singular class, caste, colour, religion, region and culture. According to post modern feminists, women or gender is a multi-dimensional term, it signifies a varied implications, multiple realities and a lot of life-experiences. Hence, it is imperative, they hold, to have a different explanation and analysis of deconstructed and fragmented identity of the women.

Critics of postmodern feminism, however, observe that post-modern feminism has attempted to deconstruct the identity of women which has resulted in weakening the central solidarity and the feminist sisterhood, the feminists of several variants have tried to build up through ages.



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## 8.6 Summing Up

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- Feminism as an approach to the study of political science is different from other approaches. The feminists are of opinion that the domain of political theory like that of mythology, literature and culture is male-centric. Mainstream politics, they strongly observe, is but malestream politics. The women who constitute even more than the lion's share of the total resources of the world and receive less than one percent of it, are subject to domination, exploitation and violence. Both the institution of patriarchy and multi-dimensional vulnerability of the women are ubiquitous and restlessly terrifying. Feminism signifies the protest against the male-dominated theory, ideology, socio-political practices, and culture which deny freedom, equality, power and rights of the women and have suppressed and subjugated them over centuries.
- The critical perspective of feminism is an important key to understand politics which does have multiple meanings and diverse manifestations. The theme or perspective of feminism has now led to proliferation of research not only in the field of political science but in other disciplines dealing with human relationships irrespective of their focus specificity.

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## 8.7 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. What are various concepts associated with feminism. Explain those concepts.
2. What are the main propositions of liberal feminism? How the radical feminists criticise liberal feminism?
3. What are the basic contentions of Marxist and Socialist feminisms. Is there any difference of emphasis between the two?
4. Point out the main content of postmodern feminism. What are its limitations?
5. Make, a critical estimate of feminism as a necessary perspective of political theory.

### Long Questions :

1. Examine the typologies of feminism.
2. Attempt typologies analysis of the waves of feminism.

**Short Questions :**

1. Define gender. How do you differentiate gender from sex?
2. What according to you, does 'personal is political' imply?
3. Examine how the feminists view patriarchy.
4. What are the basic arguments of radical feminism? Ellucidate.

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**8.8 Further Reading**

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## **Unit 9 □ Postmodern Perspective in Political Theory**

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### **Structure**

#### **9.0 Objective**

#### **9.1 Introduction**

#### **9.2 Meaning of Postmodernism**

#### **9.3 Origin of Post-modernism**

##### **9.3.1 Philosophical Sources**

#### **9.4 Post-modernist Thinkers**

#### **9.5 Features of Post-modern perspective**

#### **9.6 Debate between Marxism and Post-modern perspective**

#### **9.7 Summing Up**

#### **9.8 Probable Questions**

#### **9.9 Further Readings**

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### **9.0 Objective**

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After studying the materials of this unit, the learners will understand

- Meaning of postmodernism
- Background of the growth of postmodernism
- Features of postmodernism
- Content of the debate between Marxism and Postmodernism

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### **9.1 Introduction**

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Postmodernism is a sharp intellectual movement against modernity. It presents a pungent criticism of painting, art, architecture, literature, movie, music, history, theory and doctrine, etc., emanated out or drawn in the spirit of modernity. Although the notion of postmodernism dates back to 1870 when John Watkins Chapman, an English painter used the term postmodern while reviewing the impressionist art of the French, in the field of social science as such, postmodernism, as a critical

perspective, is a development of the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century. Jean Francois Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard are the main exponents of postmodernism.

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## **9.2 Meaning of Postmodernism**

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Postmodernism, in fact, is a radical discursive position which involves enormous ambiguity and controversy and, for this reason, it is convenient for us to state with what we mean by modernity by postmodernism developed by the above-said postmodern thinkers.

Modernity is rooted in the Enlightenment and anchored in rationalism. Enlightenment denotes an intellectual movement took place in the sphere of ideas and thinking in Europe in the middle of the eighteenth century. It led to free social and political life from orthodoxy and obscurity and inspired growth of new attitude and outlook basing on reason. This reason-based attitude and outlook favoured by Voltaire, Locke, Descartes, Didero etc. gave birth to a regime of knowledge which is all-engulfing and beyond which nothing exists. This attitudinal and philosophical framework is called rationalism which provides the reason and authoritative authenticity of all explanations of various phenomena of the universe.

Modernity implies truth, beauty and all that standards exist as objective realities that can be discovered, known and understood through rational and scientific means. In this sense, modernity is closely associated with positivism which affirms the view that relies on scientific method as the only source of true knowledge. Modernity, like positivism, rejects tradition and metaphysics as pre-scientific firms of thought.

Modernity ushered in an age of reason. In this age man became aware of his own potentiality and was able to replace God from the centre of thought and action. This age espoused and affirmed the rational, natural or earthly, secular, human-centric thought-process. Francis Bacon strongly favoured scientific and technological advancement for the fulfillment of human needs. Mastery of man over nature was thought to be the mian function of scientific knowledge. Scientific truth established through rigorous analysis of empirical data and information is infallible, absolute and universal.

Modern age was as an age of progress too. On the basis of unprecedented development of science and technology, transport and communication industrial production and trade and business get a tremendous fillip which helped to boost market worldwide. This age put an end to feudalism and gave birth to a new

civilization based on new mode of production. This new civilization asserted the supremacy of reason which made man his own master. In this respect, modernity is an offshot of Enlightenment which according to Kant stands for man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity which hinders man's own understanding of his immense power inherent in him.

Enlightenment entails an engulfing force of reason, rationality and scientific temper and it criticizes all that which appears as unscientific and irrational. According to the spirit of Enlightenment, all human actions and all explanations of things come under the strict rule and scrutiny of reason; and it is reason which searches out and establishes decisive, total and unchanging or constant truth. This truth is, in nature, essential and foundational and denies relativism in respect of reaching alternative truth. Establishment of this truth is the motto of science which is used to create the wealth or to increase the productivity of material production. Huge material production requires the development of technology along with science and this science and technology combined together forges a powerful 'cultural regime' which determines not only human actions but unwaveringly believes in the notion that it is able to expose and explain the rules and laws of development of history and society. Modernity as sponsored by Enlightenment thus believes in historicism ; and it asserts that the development of history is unilinear and always it advances towards progress. Being inspired by the all-engulfing culture of reason, science and technology as activated by the motivation to produce more, the concept of creation and strengthening of nation-states looms large and those are established on the basis of homogeneous notion cutting across all cultural diversities and societal differences and heterogeneities and micro identities existent in societies. Overriding and denial of all these cultural diversities and societal fragments require power of dominance and aggressive assertions which sought to be legitimized by the doctrine of the power-thinker like Machavelli, a strong representative of this age of Enlightenment.

The inter-relation between Enlightenment and modernity is very close or, to say, organic. The inherent attributes of modernity are claimed to be the attributes of humanism. Enlightenment and, for that matter, modernity were responsible for American War of Independence in 1776, French revolution of 1789 and rapid industrialization of 1780s and thereafter, which led to the birth of capitalism drawn on the philosophical system of individualism and on general progress of mankind.

But postmodernism has no unified, essential and foundational definition, nor it represents a so-called coherent theoretical scheme with formidable doctrinaire position usually preferred by a typical scholar in social science or by socio-political activist

working on any uni-dimensional issue. The central theme of postmodernism as developed by the thinkers is oriented to criticize the notions and the social and political messages of modernity and to point out the limitations of it as a praxis. These limitations were exposed in the course of its operation both at the level of theory and practice to which all dominant social and political theories and their practical manifestations including Marxism have been subjected to. Instead of essentialism, foundationalism, totality, universalism, determinism and homogeneity inherent in modernity, postmodernism relies on relativism, pluralism, detotalization, localism, disclosure and fragmentation, deconstruction and heterogeneity.

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### **9.3 Origin of Postmodernism**

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In social science and in the realm of social and political practice, postmodernism emerged in the background which is composed by the students' uprising and protest movements in Europe and in the United States in the middle of the twentieth century. The postmodernists are of opinion that the entire first half of the twentieth century is riddled with conflicts, chaos and contradictions and all these are grown out of obsessive attitude to hyper-scientific and rational epistemology and overlordship of scientific and technological revolution (STR) pushed and spearheaded by the nations who later turned into powerful imperialist powers in an age of flourishing industrialism. The twentieth century, for important reasons, is eventful. It witnessed the First World War, the emergence of socialist state in Russia rise of fascism and nazism respectively in Italy and Germany, heinous genocide, outbreak of the Second World War, heart-breaking Hiroshima and Nagasaki, crushing of nationalist and democratic aspirations of the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America by the colonial and imperialist powers, birth of cold war between the USA and the erstwhile USSR, politics of possession over world economic, social and political resources by both the capitalist and the socialist blocs, rampant exploitation and mass killing in Vietnam-Laos and Kampuchia, cross border terrorism, fall of Berlin Wall, repeated gulf wars, dissolution of the USSR, burgeoning recession in capitalism etc. on the one hand and on the other, liberation and emergence of many new nations, birth of an wide array of new social movements in various parts of the world like feminist movements, environmental movements, human rights movements of varried forms, urge for sustainable development and so on and so forth through the length of this century. Questions were raised contesting the claims of modernity to (a) emancipate man from unreasonable exploitation and oppression of myriad forms and degrees, (b) ensure progress, and (c) make new history of mankind free from unreason and untruth.

### 9.3.1 Philosophical Sources

Jean Jacques Rousseau, influenced by romanticism, had first raised question against the validity of reason and rationality and of the notion of progress and universalism as emphatically stressed by European modernity and the 17th century Enlightenment. Rousseau was not in a position to approve the confinement of man and his free consciousness to so-called hyper-scientific laws and rules as urged by the positivists. Kant also had expressed his categorical doubt against it. Professor Sobhanlal Datta Gupta contends that Kant's bifurcation of the world of noumenon and the world of phenomenon, his distinction between the beautiful and the sublime, were powerful philosophical pointers in this direction. Professor Datta Gupta is also of opinion that it is this notion of critique of reason which later flowed into the ideas of Frankfurt School and exposed the vandalizing power of instrumental reason. It revealed, most flagrantly, the content of unreason resident in reason as valorized by European modernity.

Postmodern socio-political perspective, it is commonly taken, has received a direct impetus from Nietzsche and Heidegger. Nietzsche is the champion of perspectivism. He is of opinion that interpretations and conceptions of truth depend on perspective. There is nothing saying of absolute truth. Truth varies because of perspective of persons who seek to understand and realize truth varies. According to him, a particular language is not always adequate expression of all realities. Concepts, he holds, may have a long history and in the course of history those concepts are variously defined and understood by people who are in different and heterogeneous positions and with different and heterogeneous perspectives. His *Genealogy of Morals* approves no objective point upon which anything particular and systematic can be built.

Martin Heidegger is very much averse to positivism of modernity and to modern technology which, according to him, lead to homelessness. Modern technology, he contends, is dangerous because it is the ultimate distance from the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, existence or reality. Heidegger seeks to restore a home for man in an awareness of Being. In the *Letter of Humanism* of 1947 he says that homelessness consists in the abandonment of Being by beings and because of it the truth of being remains unthought. Heidegger is in favour of liberation of language from grammar which asks everyone and everything to strictly conform to rules. He opines that thinking begins only when we have come to know that reason glorified for centuries, is the most stiff-necked adversary of thought. Instead of modern utilitarian, technological and, for that matter meaningless and

empty world Heidegger aims at returning to a supersensuous world where Being would present itself in its plenitude. His philosophical attitude to modern technology leads him to oppose both the capitalist and socialist industrialism.

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## 9.4 Postmodernist Thinkers

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### 1. Lyotard

Armed with the attitude and interpretation of many thinkers and philosophers against modernity and Enlightenment Jean Francois Lyotard in his *The Postmodern Condition – A Report on Knowledge* (1979) represents the central core of postmodern thinking. Lyotard does not believe in the great plans that shape the world. He explicitly rejects totalizing perspectives on history and society. These totalizing perspectives are, according to him, the grand narratives or the meta-narratives. Incredulity towards meta-narratives is his strong philosophical position with which he questions the privileged position of scientific rationalism as a dominant form of knowledge. Lyotard contends that postmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of authorities; it refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable. He discovers intolerance and varying degree of dictate behind the modernist design of so-called universalism, essentialism and totality the modernists have implanted into their science, history, language and narratives. Modernist notions of emancipation, freedom and progress are not, according to Lyotard, very reliable and, hence, are doubtful, and, for this reason, he prefers smallish, localized narratives to meta-narratives or the grand narratives, of modernity. Localized narratives or micro narratives, as Lyotard implies, rescues what is displaced in the high flow of modernism, confines none and nothing to cultural stereotypes and recognizes boundless diversity, differences and million motives and aspirations of man.

### 2. Foucault

Michel Foucault is a very strong postmodernist thinker. He contends that there is nothing saying of absolute truth. Truth is recognized by society and as social reality is always in a state of flux truth, he says, varies. According to him, men in society exchange their ideas and information through signs, symbols, pictures, languages and discourses which reflect power distributed among the members of society.

Foucault believes that knowledge is not immune from the workings of power. Power, as he says, has the character of a network which has a wide reach in society.



In his opinion, schools, hospitals, workshops, barracks of modern society are all, in fact the epitome of power where men in there are to become socialized and to work under strict surveillance of the person who can use language, sign, symbol and discourse with greater dominance. Foucault opines that there are various forms of human rationality, diverse and heterogeneous traditions of reason in the histories of human societies, different modes of logical consistency and argumentations which together contradict the monist privilege of essential reason. The reason of Enlightenment is thus repressive to all other forms of reason ; it marginalizes all other reasons and excludes them as unreason, thereby builds an imperialist regime of a despotic reason which forcefully declares itself as the supreme and sovereign and trivialize others as being inadequate, fragmentary and subordinate. So according to Foucault, post-Enlightenment reason is a discourse of power which standardizes, homogenizes and determines what is rational and what is irrational.

Foucault holds that power is an integral component in the production of knowledge, reason and truth and all these are not outside power and are lacking in power, rather they manifest the workings and plays of power. His particular position to power-knowledge or power-truth relationship implies that he seeks to take and support a relativist position. He attacks on the tyranny of the great systems, grand theories and vital truths. His aim is to give free play to difference, to local and contextual knowledge, to fragmented and subjugated peripheral knowledge, to marginalized wisdoms, and to rupture, contingency and discontinuity.

Michel Foucault, once himself a Marxist and member of French Communist Party, raises serious question against Marxism which, according to him, is emanated from the so-called European modernity as it could not alienate itself from the root of western knowledge. As he contends Marxism is a structure of orthodoxy and it has failed to solve the problem relating to gender, environment, minority community and crime. Dialectical materialism and class struggle are but grand narratives which expand the net of power- knowledge relationships and create a new equation that instead of hastening the freedom of the masses helps in unfolding a new social and political tyranny. He denounces the role and the belief system of the Communist Party of France as determined by the then Soviet Union and unequivocally supported the East European communist dissenters. *Madness and Civilization* (1961), *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), *History of Sexuality* (Vols I-III, 1976-1987-1990) and *Discipline and Punish* (1977) are the major works of Michel Foucault where he has presented his critique of modernism and his own post-structuralist and postmodernist position.

### 3. Derrida

Jacques Derrida, starts his philosophical journey with severe attack on structuralism and also with strong belief that a word, or a poetry or a language express and reveal multiple meanings and implications. In his *Writing and Difference* (1978) ; *Of Grammatology* (1967), *Margin of Philosophy* (1981) and *Voice and Phenomenon* (1967), in particular, he establishes his stand for postmodernism. Derrida repudiates Logocentrism which approves the notion that truth is the fundamental, fullest and central thing that expresses the cause or the meaning of origin. Logocentrism, according to him, phallographic, patriarchal and masculine because it rejects others contradicting the central truth. He is, however, agreed to recognize the multiple meanings of any text. As periphery resides within centre, he opines, text involves several dimensions and implications which are denied by the orthodox western scholars. The footnotes and the notes in the margin of a text are important for the text to reveal itself. Derrida here prescribes the need for deconstruction of all constructed texts to reveal what they seek to express and thus they become new construction. Deconstruction, as he thinks, helps to liberate text and truth drawn on uni-linear fashion and thus to continue the search of new and new text and truth which themselves are subject to further analysis and inquiry. Truth, thus, according to Derrida, is not permanent, nor it is universal; but it is contextual as its validity is judged by the context which is but changing.

Jacques Derrida's postmodernist ideas do have important impact upon the feminist, lesbian, minority and other identity groups who challenge the centralized socio-cultural values of socially and politically authoritarian regime. Derrida opposes any scheme or project forged by any political orthodoxy, and for this reason, he rejects authoritarian inheritance of Marxism. He prefers discursive Marxism to 'scientific' Marxism.

### 4. Baudrillard

Jean Baudrillard is an ardent postmodernist who later views postmodernity as completely a new phenomenon totally dissociated from modernity. Baudrillard starts his postmodernist philosophical journey with his opposition to Marxism. He has introduced the idea of symbolic exchange as against economic exchange. He is of opinion that in postmodern society a cycle of giving and receiving, taking and returning is in constant operation. Contemporary society is not controlled and determined by production, rather it is controlled and dominated by media, cybernetic models and steering systems, computers, information processing, entertainment and

knowledge industries. All these models, systems and devices produce or create signs through which coding and decoding of everything are done. These signs and their producers or creators, in fact, control the society. In this society, profit, exploitation or mode of production are irrelevant, and the signs are predominant and these signs are themselves self-referential. In this society, there remains no distinction between signs and the social reality and just for this reason, it is very difficult to determine what does reality mean in definite terms. Baudrillard observes that productive system, commodity and technology as such do not imply the characteristics of the present society. This society instead is characterized by implosion of the distinction between signs and reality. Baudrillard contends that post modern society can be seen as undergoing the process of dedifferentiation while modern world underwent a process of differentiation.

Baudrillard describes this world as hyperreality. He opines that the media pervades or engulf all the aspects and spheres of life. In so doing it becomes even more real than life is in reality. Whatever the media presents are indiscriminately followed by people who accept their presentations as more than real without judging their validity. In this process, Baudrillard observes, the real takes on the character of hyperreal which, in the end, replaces the real and establishes itself as real in collective mind and perception. This perception makes the masses increasingly passive, indifferent and apathetic and creates a culture of death.

The *Mirror of Production* (1975), *Simulacres et Simulation* (1981), *The Gulf War did not take place* (1995) are Baudrillard's main works.

It is relevant to mention here that none of the postmodernist interpretations as advanced by Lyotard, Foucault, Derrida and Baudrillard is above and beyond criticism. Charles Taylor, Noam Chomsky, Camil Paglia, Jurgen Habermas among others have raised serious allegation against postmodernism for its conceptual inconsistency as evident in understanding and presentation of the overall trends of the world we are living in. The language, the postmodernist thinkers have used is exorbitantly complex and full of jargons thereby making their statements unusually critical. Various critics are of opinion that, postmodernism is highly diverse intellectual activity as a result of which it can not provide any distinct idea about what postmodernism does mean in particular. It lacks coherence and promotes resistance to reliable knowledge and relativism in culture and morality.

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## 9.5 Features of Postmodern Perspective

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Despite intricacy immanent in concepts and presentation of original postmodern socio-political literatures we can sort out some features of postmodern perspective in the following way.

1. In the sphere of knowledge, no inference is final, conclusive and decisive, nor it can be scientific and be categorized as unchanging truth. Knowledge called scientific or theories pronounced as grand and systematic are established by dominant power existent in society. Knowledge, according to postmodernist perspective, is contextual and culture-specific and truths are many and they appear differently to different people at different places and circumstances. Pure reason and infallible knowledge are myth, according to postmodernist interpretation.
2. The notion of power is no uni-dimensional and it is not always necessarily state-centric. Power is ubiquitous in society. Postmodern politics is suspicious of the nation-state system and considers it as a political construction. As against Hegel it denies the emergence and existence of state as an instrument of change of human history and ensuring progress. State power extolls itself and besieges micro, marginal, local and fragmented entities that possess significant resources in making numerous narratives.
3. Postmodern perspectives is opposed to historicism. The postmodernists assert that there is no overall pattern in history, nor history is progressive and is progressing towards any perfection enhancing the freedom of man. History is directionless. History, knowledge and human subject are fundamentally rooted in contingency, discontinuity and iniquitous origins. Postmodern thinkers believe in the irreducible contingency and indeterminacy.
4. Postmodern perspective opposes Marxian explanation of state machinery. The postmodernists are of opinion that power is not only concentrated in the machinery of state. Power has the character of a network which has a wide reach in society. Within society, power is variegated and found everywhere and, hence it is difficult to step outside the net of power. The concept of power, according to postmodernist perspective is multi-dimensional as it operates in much more subtle and small level of regular human activity.
5. The state in postmodern discourse does have no class character because of the fact that society and state do have multiple discourses of multiple groups

and entities basing on gender, class and ethnicity. Class-centric politics, according to the postmodernist interpretation, is too limited and does not represent the diverse narratives and interactions taking place in the realm of society and state.

6. Postmodernism defies universal reason and the prospect of rational thinking as emphasized by modernism. For this matter, it goes against its project of humanism and the assurance of independence, freedom, democracy and so-called scientific advancement of human civilization as pronounced by modernity which has extolled its pure reason and science winning over spiritual forces. The postmodernists are of opinion that western ideologies based on the spirit of European Enlightenment, instead of expanding independence in thinking and belief in progress of human race, have allowed the politics of power and are used to colonize foreign cultures and subjugate the minorities and the underprivileged.
7. Postmodernists contend that politics is all-pervading and it is the fundamental basis of our life, of our thinking and activity. All aspects of our life and activity, our existence and feeling, thinking and consciousness, our realization of nature and of needs of others are derivatives of politics which again is shaped by them. Politics is thus an important component of human life and the core of politics is composed of whatever happens in the realm of thinking and activity of human being.
8. Postmodernism tends to reject broad narratives which are taken as authoritative and conceal diverse narratives in the name of absolute and essential reason and science by means of homogenization of all plural and heterogeneous forces existing in state and society. Jacques Derrida, hence, has urged the need for deconstruction of the modernist construction and the modernist text or discourse which do not represent the concrete reality or truth. The purpose of deconstruction is to discover the opposite discourse of the prevalent language and text which rationalize metaphysics as science and domination as natural rule.
9. Postmodern condition of the present world is characterized, as Baudrillard observes, by symbolic exchange simulation, hyperreality and seduction. The media and the electronic devices have changed the social, economic, political and cultural processes as introduced by modernism and have taken away distinction between signs and reality. The media today is no longer the mirror of reality, but it becomes even more real than reality. This hyperreality

have created a catastrophic culture absorbing the masses who later forget everything meaningful and who lose the revolutionary hope as Marx urged or the need for reform as Durkheim hoped.

10. Postmodern perspective is appeared as distinct and exceptional. When all other theories tend to prescribe any particular state of affair as being good and ideal and guide people to follow and execute it to benefit them, postmodernism does not search for any master discourse. On the contrary, it encourages relativism and scepticism towards and also sabotage against dominant theory, dominant ideology, dominant epistemology and dominant socio-political and cultural force.

Postmodernism is explained as being self-refuting and anarchical as it does not even allow itself any pause in decentering the centre, debasing the based, indeterminating the determinate, deunifying the unified and demystifying the mistified.

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## **9.6 Debate between Marxism and Postmodern perspective**

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The debate between Marxism and postmodernism is very interesting as it possesses a deep theoretical as well as practical value. Scholars like Alex Callinicos, E.M. Wood and Terry Eagleton have taken a very sharp critical position against postmodernism. They consider the postmodernist position vis-a-vis Marxism is baffling, dangerous and reactionary. They are of opinion that Marxism project is an alternative to capitalism that is meant for an explanation of oppression, domination and exploitation of man by man. Although Marxism is an outcome of European modernism based on reason and rationality, it negates and is critical towards bourgeois modernism that enslaves man by controlling the reason of capital. Postmodernism tends to attack the Marxist project to create a society free from class domination and class exploitation. A society based on the Marxist principles is society that ensures freedom and equality not for any particular class but for the entire citizenry. Postmodernism, these scholars argue, defeats this grand project of emancipation of man.

Marxist scholar Aijaz Ahmad in his book 'In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literature', contends that postmodernism is an intellectual weapon of imperialism. It decisively seeks to uproot socialism and weaken class struggle. It rationalises the capitalist order and misguides the international communist movement for establishing socialism on the demolition of imperialism and colonialism.

A few other Marxist ideologues have denounced postmodernism using several

virulent comments like (a) it is disguised enemy of Marxism, (b) it is intellectually marked nihilism, and (c) it is a bourgeois ideology in its finest sophistication, etc.

Some other Marxist critics are of opinion that in an age of total confusion resultantly grown out of the fall of Berlin Wall, breakdown of socialist regimes in East European countries, end of Maoist period in China and finally collapse of the Soviet Union in Russia, postmodernism seeks to roll back the wheel of civilization. These critics contend that the seventeenth century renaissance-reformation and Enlightenment had brought reason and rationalism in Europe. Refusing any particular scheme of social development, postmodernism seeks to refute and attack rationalism. Essentially the philosophy postmodernism espouses is but the fatalism of the middle ages.

Marxism is born in the process of modernity. The foundation of Marxism is materialistic philosophy based on rationalism. By its rejection of grand narrative, postmodernism defends the narrative of disorder and anarchy. Marxist critics of post modernism observe that European Enlightenment does have tremendous intellectual contribution to the advancement of human history and human civilization. The theorists and philosophers of Enlightenment like Locke, Kant, Hume, Descartes, Bacon have constructed the theory of progress and advancement by means of illuminating the inner relationship between science and advancement. The postmodernists have opposed Enlightenment and modernism but they could not prescribe any alternative philosophy and theory of human progress and advancement. From this point of view, postmodernism is pointless. It is but an word game. It is itself the dead end of philosophy and of political theory.

Fredric Jameson has criticized postmodernism from a rather moderate Marxist standpoint. According to him, postmodernism is the cultural logic of late capitalism. He opines that modernity is the relevant culture of market capitalism while globalized capitalism has created postmodernism as its relevant culture. He has opposed Lyotard when he advocates incredulity to meta-narrative, and observes that the relevance of meta-narrative is still valid. He strongly holds the view that history could not be reduced to only text and narrative, and history, according to him, is the narrative of class struggle. In the sphere of politics, he believes firmly, the notion of totality can not be avoided. Jameson is of the view that postmodernism refuses to critically engage itself with the meta-narrative of capitalization and globalization. This refusal makes it consistent with prevailing relations of domination and exploitation.

Perry Anderson has identified a new kind of capitalism which rose in the very later part of the twentieth century. It has led, as he observes, to the birth of postmodernism. Uncertain, restless and speculative stock market condition determining the worldwide flow of capital is the characteristic of this new capitalism. This time

is a time of boom of information technology which transforms the real man into a digitized image altogether averse and unable to reverse the consistent trend of frustration, cynicism and negation spread in all spheres of life. Features and trends of this age are, Anderson contends, features and trends of postmodernism.

As the various Marxist scholars and ideologues criticize postmodernism, the postmodernists are also critical against Marxism and the Marxists. Prof. Sobhanlal Datta Gupta has excellently put together the points of criticism the postmodernists have raised against Marxism. We now mention below the postmodernist arguments against Marxism.

First of all, Marxism is an offshoot of modernity. It is a branch and a component of it. It is a metanarrative and a grand utopia against the bourgeois vision of modernity. Marxism is grounded in the notion of reason as emphasized by the European Enlightenment. In Marxism the reason and rationality of capital is replaced by the reason and rationality of class struggle is the only difference between bourgeois vision of modernity and Marxist vision of modernity.

Secondly, as postmodernism opposes teleological history and as history is fluid and indeterminate and endowed with a plurality of meanings, according to the postmodern understanding of history, it contests Marxism as it considers the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle and the future development of history will culminate, as Marxism contends, in the attainment of communism via socialism. Postmodernism does not believe in such unilinear progress of history.

Thirdly, in the postmodernist power-knowledge frame of reference, the vision of socialism is outmoded and not tenable because it is essentially a universalist and totalizing frame basically grounded in reason. The Marxian project of socialism and communism represents the notion of power and domination and reflects a persistent trend of totalitarianism.

Fourthly, Marxist narrative of class struggle is highly sceptical as history of man is not a result of class struggle, nor it is at its command and will follow its unilateral directives to evolve in the days ahead. The postmodernists contend that history is replete with million struggles waged by various groups at different local and micro levels.

Fifthly, Marxism defies the multidimensional existence of gender, tribe, caste and clan and it has given total emphasis on class in its meta-narrative of universal history. It thus gets history in closure.

Sixthly, Marxism believes in uniformity so far as the composition and development of history are concerned. It negates difference. According to the Marxists, class is the



chief component of society and history and they develop according to the universal logic of class struggle. But, on the contrary, the postmodern view of history has its emphasis on difference, fragments and deconstruction.

Seventhly, Marxism relies on revolution and revolutionary parties as relevant to social and political transformation and change. So the macro ideas relating to society and politics are central concern upon Marxism lays central emphasis, while decentering the centre or the central is strongly espoused by postmodernism.

Eighthly, as Marxism disapproves plurality, multi-dimensionality, heterogeneity, and contextual specificity in respect of social composition and / or human action, it denies the concept of freedom and democracy.

Two important notes in the concluding part of the debate between Marxism and postmodernism are thought to be worth mentioning.

Note 1. It is not Marx but Marxism of some Marxist ideologues, scholars and practitioners that has been the prime target of postmodernist criticism. And

Note 2. It is Marx and his Marxism that have led the mainstream postmodernists to reinstate the creative principles of emancipatory Marxism.

The original Marx and his own Marxism is not unilinear, opposed to multi-dimensionality and historical and contextual specificity and confined to fixity or closure. The Class Struggle in France, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, The Civil War in France composed by Marx and The Peasant War in Germany composed by Marx and his associate, Fredrich Engels, have reflected in clear terms historical specificity and multi-dimensionality of struggle as against universality and unilinearity of history. Even the writings like The Development of Capitalism in Russia by Lenin, The Analysis of Classes in Chinese Society by Mao Zedong and Prison Notebook by Antonio Gramsci were the exercises into understanding the particular situations of revolutionary processes against contemporary feudalism, capitalism and fascism.

Marxism is basically a subjective instrument to change the objective reality of class exploitation and class domination. But literatures like Bukharin's theory of Historical Materialism : a Manual of Popular Sociology, Stalin's Foundation of Leninism and A Short History of the CPSU (Bolshevik) etc., have transformed Marxism into science and into manualized doctrine. The turning of Marxism into a Bolshevik phenomenon, its growing Stalinization, the outright negation and forceful repression of the 'other' or the 'different' as represented by Trotsky or Rosa Luxemburg, growth of absolute centrality and bureaucratization in the structure and functioning of the communist party particularly in Soviet Union, etc., had reduced creative

Marxism into mechanical, hyperrational and regressive Marxism which reflects essentialism, absence of difference and otherness and negation of democracy and tolerance. The Soviet communist experiment with the East European nations like Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia narrates the meta-narrative of control, surveillance and domination upon which the 'Soviet Marxism' excessively relied. This storyline of the 'Soviet Marxism' got it in permanent closure towards the close of the twentieth century.

Twenty first century may be a time-period of dialogue between Marxism and postmodernism. Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida had expressed their unwavering faith in Marxism as revealed in their several conversations. Coming out of scholars, intellectuals and practitioners who have intense reading of original Marxism and of the nature and movement of international capitalism is the need of the hour, for initiating the dialogue between Marxism and postmodernism in the interest of removing the poverty, both physical and philosophical.

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## 9.7 Summing Up

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- Postmodernism is the critique of the basic ideas and assumptions of modernism and their impacts on art, literature and theories and discourses of state, society, politics and culture.
- Modernity is a necessary product of European Enlightenment that emphasized the totalizing and essentializing notions like rationalism, scientism, humanism, integration and general progress. But the objective social and political reality as grown even in enlightened Europe and America in the face of diverse socio-political chaos and contradiction has challenged the basic assumptions of modernity and bring out the hollowed content of grand theories and metanarratives built upon those ideas and assumptions modernity incorporates and espouses.
- As against modernist discourse, Lyotard, Foucault, Derrida and Baudrillard and many others drawing impetus from Nietzsche and Heidegger have emphasized the existence of multiple meaning of truth and they have questioned the validity of settled assumptions of knowledge relating to society, culture and civilization.

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## 9.8 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Discuss the background of the emergence of postmodernism.

2. How do the Marxists criticize postmodernism?
3. Give an account of the postmodernist critique of Marxism.

**Long Type Questions :**

1. Attempt an overview of the viewpoints of Foucault and Derrida.
2. In what can postmodernism be considered as a critique of modernity?

**Short Questions :**

1. Give an account on the distinction between modernism and postmodernism.
2. What do you mean by postmodernism ?
3. Discuss, in brief, the characteristics of postmodernism.
4. How does Lyotard/Foucault/ Derrida / Baudrillard express his postmodernist position?

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**9.9 Further Reading**

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# **Unit 10 □ Postcolonial Perspective in Political Theory**

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## **Structure**

### **10.0 Objective**

### **10.1 Introduction**

### **10.2 Evolution and Development of the Theory of Postcolonialism : the perspective of Frantz Fanon**

#### **10.2.1 Contribution of Edward W. Said**

#### **10.2.2 Homi K. Bhabha and the Theory of postcolonialism**

#### **10.2.3 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and the Theory of Postcolonialism**

### **10.3 Features of the Theory of Postcolonialism**

### **10.4 Limitations of Postcolonial Perspective**

### **10.5 Summing up**

### **10.6 Probable Questions**

### **10.7 Further Readings**

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## **10.0 Objective**

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After studying the materials of this unit the learners will understand

- Meaning of Postcolonialism
- Growth and development of the perspective of postcolonialism
- Different ideas of different scholars on postcolonialism
- Features of postcolonial perspectives
- Limitations of the perspective of postcolonialism.

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## **10.1 Introduction**

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Postcolonialism is a recent discursive perspective in political and social theory. In the fields of literature, film, music and art, postcolonialism is a topic of enduring

critical discussion. It is a subject, basically inter-disciplinary in nature and has become substantially complex but multi-dimensional attractive subject as it involves several questions of intellectual debates relating to epistemological and philosophical thought-processes. Postcolonialism to be precise, is the cultural critique of western colonialism, most formally has evolved in 1970s and '80s. But the root of its evolution dates back to much earlier and the inspiration of this critique or theoretical perspective still permeates a good number of contemporary works of cultural, artistic, literary and educational significance.

We all know that colonialism is the name of transformed imperialism. The objective of colonialism is not just to occupy colony through military aggression but to ensure and perpetuate economic exploitation and political control by means of extending the net of power and domination over the realm of psyche and culture of the colonized. The colonial rulers and their intellectual associates legitimizing the colonial rules designate the West as responsible for bringing the colonized of Asia, Africa and Latin America in the light of 'modern' civilization. Rudyard Kipling and many other had much earlier stated the burden of the colonized and their ignorance, poverty and destitute as being the responsibility of the White to address.

Postcolonialism signifies the project of extension of civilization by the White rulers and their following and associating social theorists and literary community. Ideologically postcolonialism and postcolonial writings highlight on the forceful cultural and racial domination and supremacy of the West over the non-western world and people thereof. Joseph Arnest Renan, a French racialist orientalist had made rude and offensive remarks towards the non-White people of non-western nations in his various works in the second part of the nineteenth century. These people having old and obsolete ideas and orientations had, as Renan observed, no sense of world civilization of modern times. In all respects, they, according to him, were backward and stupid. Thomas Babington Macaulay in his infamous educational Minute of 1835 despised the tradition of education and learning in Sanskrit language as prevalent in the early part of British India and strongly exalted the superiority of western literature and system of knowledge. In his Minute Macaulay remarked that the education and learning pattern of the native was much inferior to education and learning as rife in the lower primary schools in England.

Almost similar narrative regarding Indian education and culture and of civilization Reverend J. Tucker had presented. In his opinion, Indian civilization is inferior

because Indian mind is deficient in power and the world of understanding of the Indian people is void. Indian people, as Tucker contended, are not those people who are entitled to have importance in the light of Enlightenment humanism as they lack superior knowledge and education or the will to have such knowledge and education. The colonial rulers and their associates are, in fact, so racist as they strongly believe that East is East and West is West and never the twine shall meet as the knowledge and education and culture and civilization of the West reside in a place far beyond the reach of those of the East. There is no denying the fact that the real intention and scheme of these remarks and observations were designed to demolish the cultural and moral backbone of the colonized of the orient and exploitation and looting of economic resources of these countries on long-term basis. As we know, every nation possesses broady two kinds of basic resources: (a) psychological and cultural resources involving the power of mind, consciousness and thought-process and (b) economic resources embeded in water, forests, mines, agriculture and industry. The strongly coarse expression of arrogant egoism of the ethno-centric and racist rulers and their hired administrators and intellectuals was but to consolidate colonial control and domination over these two kinds of resources of the colonized nations. And it indicates that the cultural and psychological supremacy and racial egoism of the West definitely and desperately shows the existence of power-relations between the colonizer and the colonized. Postcolonialism and postcolonial writings have stood against the colonial ethics and ideology and oppose their pervading impact that dampens the spirit and energy of resurgence and regeneration of people once colonized.

Postcolonialism is indeed a study of the cultural conflicts and confrontations and their several ramifications which are very complex as they appear often mutally contending. These cultural conflicts and confrontations befall between the dominant racist colonizers of Europe and the colonized of Asia and Africa. Postcolonialism is not culturally or theoretically someting that has evolved in the period when and where colonialism had ended. The mainstream theorists of postcolonialism have enphasized the notion of postcolonial condition or the condition of postcoloniality as an important theme inherent in postcolonialism and most of them, thus, justify not to append hyphen between post and colonialism. These theorists are of opinion that the colonizers use to have intention to establish perpetual cultural hegemony upon the colonized nations. They firmly require to destroy not only their respective economy but to crush their language, education, culture and general understanding of moral principles. Desperately they use to follow very deliberate and subtle plan to implement

so as to get the general desire, taste and common ideas and prejudices of the people of the colonies consistent with and suitable to the colonial interest of the West. Perpetual subservience and subordination of the colonized to the supremacy and hegemonic hold of the colonizer refers to the condition of postcoloniality or postcolonial condition. This condition exists during the course of colonization and does not cease to exist when colonization comes to an end and the colonized acquires political statehood. Because of colonial hangover widely pervading the ideas and institutions, values and cultures of the peoples once colonized the prescription of the theorists and writers for withdrawing the hyphen between post and colonialism appears justified and consistent.

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## **10.2 Evolution and Development of the Theory : The Perspective of Frantz Fanon**

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Although writings on postcolonialism began to flourish since 1970s, Frantz Fanon, an working psychiatrist at a French hospital in Algeria, had, in the begining of 1950s penned on the psychological subordination and erosion of cultural consciousness of the colonized people all over world. The immediate perspective of Fanon's work, *Black Skin White Masks* published in 1952, was the condition of the Algerian people under French colonial rule. Here Fanon elaborated on how the colonized people destroy their own indigenous cultural resources and identities undergoing the process of imitating or going after the ideas and practices of the colonizers. His another important work, *Wretched of the Earth* was published posthumously in 1961. In this later work, Fanon observed that at the global level, power is discriminately distributed. In this book, he discussed, in strong languages, the nature of inequality of power and couflict between the colonized nations of Afro-Asia and the colonizers of Europe. Domination of colonial discourses, stupid internalization of these discourses by the colonized and its resultant all-round obedience and subordination of the indigenous black and the brown to the White, etc. have been vividly described in Fanon's writings.

Fanon is very much critical against the pervasive psychological and political aggression of the colonial rulers of Europe. He strongly rejected the egoistic demand of the White for civilizing the subjugated indigenous people under colonialism. He gave the clarion call for the people to wage psychological resistance against the colonial rulers. He was confident in that the people in the colonies are capable to rise

against cultural aggression of the colonial rulers and their associates. Rightly he understood that colonial education and culture and the very attitudes to colonial civilization were the instruments of European hegemony and all these instruments were powered by the ideas of so-called Enlightenment, rationalism, humanism, progress and modernity. But these ideas as Fanon intends to express, do not relate to the condition of the powerless colonized, rather they endanger them and marginalize them. He observes that these instruments are instruments of hegemonic colonization, and, for eradication of the racist cultural and psychological decolonization Fanon adheres to the theory of collective violence and theoretically explains the redemptive value of collective action relevant to his project of decolonization. Jean Paul Sartre who consistently believed in revolutionary existential humanism upheld earnestly Fanon's call for forceful extraction of hegemonic European culture from Africa and Asia in his introduction to *The Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon's idea and exposition of revolutionary cultural and political decolonization is reflected favourably in the works of Simone de Beauvoir and Albert Camus. As we know Simone de Beauvoir is a strong feminist theoretician of France and Albert Camus was the French leftist litterateur and philosophical thinker who won Nobel Prize in 1957 for literature at the age of only 44.

Both Fanon and Sartre were close to each other on the question of human freedom and social and moral responsibility of the individual. The philosophy of Sartre emphasized the importance of human dignity and social accountability of man. According to Sartre, freedom and social accountability are the tool of human struggle. To fight against oppression and injustice is the moral responsibility of an individual. If this individual does not take part in this struggle, he or she gets estranged from freedom and humanism and becomes himself or herself an oppressor. Fanon too considered development of new avenue for development of humanism as the moral responsibility of man. He regarded the stupid imitation of the European culture and way of life as contrary to reconstruction of human relationships and he observed that this imitation produces nothing but obscene caricature which adversely results in the way of making new history of the third world nations even after acquiring statehood after a long and protracted struggle against imperialism and colonialism.

Fanon strongly required to create creative cultural and psychological autonomy and self-identity of the colonized free from European subjugation and domination. He, however, observed that this new creative cultural autonomy and self-identity of



the colonized do not conform to the simple and uncontentious cultural values and actual practices of the people in the pre-colonial period. Fanon did not advocate to bring back the old days when our old ancestors lived in peace and tranquility. Rather he advised his fellowmen to overcome coloniality completely. In the post-colonial period, he opined, the attempt to establish creative community life of the once colonized will be failed if we fail to overcome the notions, signs, symbols or marks of coloniality. Fanon asked to evolve unceasing creative innovations by the free community for itself. He strongly believed that Europe can not make those individuals with all-round perfection. European culture and civilization does not involve any iota of humanity or humanism, on the contrary, it involves successive negations of it and it involves series of incidents of murder and killing of persons of various parts of the world. In fact, Fanon had upon him the deep impact of political thinking of his preceptor, Aime Cesaire. Cesaire once expressed his view that colonization led the colonial rulers and their associating poet, literateur and political thinkers to become wild and savage. This process of colonization turned these people into cruel and inhuman, and it sowed in them the poisonous seeds of greed and violence and racist discrimination and hatred. Almost fully convinced by the observations of his preceptor Fanon contended that the more the Europeans feel them endowed with the ideas of rationality, progress and humanism and all other gifts of European Enlightenment, the more they express their real identity as completely subdued by the pathological ideas of exploitation, racial discrimination, persecution and violence.

Fanon is a political theorist of decolonization. He strongly denounced the modernist exposition in regard to the ideas of progress and humanism of Europe and advised to shun this exposition in his attempt to repudiate coloniality of the colonized and make a creative future for them. For acquiring and ensuring freedom from the colonial rule based on violence, exploitation and racial discrimination Fanon gave the call for united revolutionary effort of the indigenous peasants, labourers, feudal masters, capitalists and the bourgeois elite for organization of national liberation struggle. He did not consider post-colonial nation-state as the only legitimate goal of this struggle; but anti-colonial nationalism and post-colonial nation-state, he observed, can require the colonized to evolve the possible condition helping them to remove mental and psychological degradation, dejection and pervasive marginalization. Fanon is of opinion that colonial world is bifurcated, and it is bifurcated between the ruler and the ruled, colonizer and the colonized, western and non-western, White and non-White. This bifurcation predominates the ideas and activities of the two contending

groups or the parties of the colonial world. Anti-colonial national liberation struggle, as he held, posed the challenge against domination and racial supremacy of the colonial rulers and their associates on the one hand, and on the other, it grew courage in the minds of the dejected colonized to raise human demands for freedom and equality. What is worth mentioning here is that Mahatma Gandhi in India and Ngugi, Cabral and Mboya in Africa had expressed their views favouring the varying influences of anti-colonial nationalism.

### **10.2.1 Contribution of Edward W. Said**

Edward W. Said has elaborated the principal features of the intellectual inheritance of postcolonialism. He published his *Orientalism* in 1978 and this work is considered as the postcolonial classic and the most pertinent referring pointer for postcolonialism. He also wrote *Culture and Imperialism* published in 1993, *The Question of Palestine*, published in 1979, *Power, Politics and Culture* published in 2001, *The Politics of Dispossession*, published in 1994 and a few other to express his views on cultural studies more concerned to point the connection between imperialism and culture.

Said had on him the profound influences of post-structuralist and anti-humanist understanding of the contiguity between colonial power and western knowledge. His *Orientalism* entails attention to the discursive production of colonial meaning and also to the consolidation of colonial hegemony. In his *Orientalism* Said emphasized the theme that has enabled marginality and the matter of colony and empire to acquire the status of a discipline or a big area of study and research in Anglo-American academy. In fact, *Orientalism* does have extending impact on intellectual formations, structures and lives both in the West and in the postcolonial non-West.

In *Orientalism*, Said has elaborated, indeed, a unique understanding of imperialism and colonialism as the epistemological and cultural attitude which accompanies the obvious habit of dominating and ruling distant territories. In his *Culture and Imperialism*, Said, again, has elaborated this idea. Here he writes that imperialism and colonialism do not indicate a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. He opines there that both imperialism and colonialism are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations and these ideological formations are based on the relationship between power and knowledge. This relationship is the source of hegemony that is imposed by the imperial and colonial rulers upon the people of the colonies. Power and domination backed by knowledge is turned into

legitimate authority which is hegemonic in nature and which is not normally defied by the people.

While unmasking the ideological disguises of imperialism, Said, in his *Orientalism*, tries to expose the reciprocal relationship between colonial power and colonial knowledge. Said is of opinion that the way the westerners exhibit, judge, observe and assess obviously express definite insolence and boastful threat of power and domination. Western knowledge has its organic link with the rule, power and authority the colonialists build in their colonies. The East is won in the way East is known. In *Orientalism*, we find that Said is heavily influenced by Michel Foucault. Here he has extended his (Foucault's) paradigmatic accounts of the organic alliance between power and knowledge to colonial conditions. While explaining the contiguity between power and knowledge, Foucault observes that knowledge transforms power, changes it from a monolithic apparatus accumulated within the state into a web-like force which is confirmed and articulated through the everyday exchanges of knowledge or information which animate social life. Accordingly, power is reproduced in discursive networks at every point where someone who knows is instructing someone who does not know.

Said is of opinion that the mastery and supremacy of power over knowledge is fatal and injurious. As he says, no self-respecting scholar or writer can get himself dissociated from the concerned social and political condition or reality and hence their work/s relates/ relate to the time, place and circumstances. In socio-political system, Said argues, power is not evenly distributed and this results in multiple problems in society and polity. A responsible scholar or writer in his work tries to address these problems and it is his or her moral commitment. But in organized political society the dominant ruling class tends to institutionalize knowledge and use the institutionalized knowledge as an instrument to serve its own class interest. As a result of it, knowledge gets degraded and deviated from its original grandeur and dignity. Against this institutionalized degraded knowledge, Said seeks to go for oppositional counter-knowledge.

Primarily Said welcomes orientalism of the western scholars. But a clear and deliberate effort to belittle and humiliate the East is definitely found implicit in the mainstream western orientalism for long. From their own standpoint and orientation, the western orientalist scholars have made explanation and description of history and culture, ideas and institutions and of social, political and religious life of the East.

These descriptions and explanations are the products of divisive mindset, full of hostility and 'us-them' discrimination. Orientalism of the occidental scholars represents superior-inferior relationship, it is inseminated by racial hatred and expresses overt and covert violence. The western orientalist have used this orientation and mindset in knowing, understanding and theorizing on the mind, nature, characteristics, socio-political and cultural behaviours and practices and general life-patterns of the easterner other who are considered distinct from the westerner selves from cultural and civilizational standpoint. Said firmly believes that the knowledge inspires this essentialization of the 'other' or, to say, this 'othering' is coercive and this coercive knowledge leads to grow discourses. Faithfully following the formulation of Foucault, Said observes that in every society discourses are produced, organized, selected and redistributed to crush or to manage popular resistance against the reigning regime and its authority. These discourses are produced, organized and redistributed under severe surveillance of the state so as to enable them to gain success in controlling the means and forms of representation in the society concerned. Said is of opinion that colonial discourses or orientalist discourses do conform to Foucault's idea of discourse and these colonial or orientalist discourses essentialize, particularize and symbolize the East as ignorant, speechless, sullen, indignant, half-devil, half-child, mystical and impoverished 'other'. Said opines that western discourses relating to the East are originally oriented to control and dominate the East; and, following Lacan's idea, he observes that the western culture with its fundamental orientation towards control and domination constructs its own self identity through 'othering'.

In his *Orientalism*, Said holds the view that by means of constructing the above-said stereotypes the western orientalist despise and neglect everything eastern and establish their own supremacy. Along this line of activity colonies are built, the indigenous education, culture, knowledge and the free spaces of common life of the people of the colonies are occupied and exploitation and persecution are kept in motion. Orientalism of the West is thus violent in nature and it is this discourse, Said observes, that offers representational violence. As he says, orientalist stereotypes invariably presupposes and confirms a totalizing and unified imperialist discourse. The arrogant and violent knowledge implicit in western orientalism, Said argues, led the imperialist and the colonial rulers and their associates to glorify and valorize their 'self' and disdain and humiliate 'other'. The power and authority the imperialist and the colonialist rulers thus assume is not only cultural and psychological, but it is also political and economic and then it is military. Western orientalism constructs the

identity of conqueror colonizer and superior for Europe and for the non-Europeans it constructs the identity of the conquered, colonized and inferior. So, as Said opines firmly, orientalism and knowledge about the orient of the occident scholars indicates a distinct scheme of relationship of power between the colonizers and the colonized, between the West and the East and between Europe and non-Europe.

The people under long-standing cultural, psychological, political, economic and military rule of the colonizers had followed, imitated and been influenced by the western education and culture, language and forms of apparent behaviour. Various attempts of the colonizers like introduction of English department in Indian universities, valorization of english literature with its own perceived beauty, truth and morality and practising Euro-centric values in public and private life had two-fold objectives. These attempts were undertaken with an intention to enforce marginality and inferiority of the colonized culture and of the indigenous knowledge and sense of morality on the one hand and to manufacture consent towards the imperial and colonial rule by means of creating in them a favourable belief-system conducive to rule the colonies on the other. Ngugi wa Thiong’O, the renowned Kenyan writer and academic and Mahatma Gandhi have given a solemn declaration of opinion against European aggression of education and culture and knowledge and wisdom of the non-European races.

Ngugi has considered the colonial language and culture as the fatal and terrifying sphere of colonial discourse. In his *Decolonizing Mind*, published in 1986, Ngugi observes that language asserts self-identity. Hence, he emphasizes on building and strengthening cultural foundation of identity of the colonized and calls for abrogation of the language and culture of the colonizers. As he opines, this act of abrogation of the alien language and culture and of building of the strong basis of own culture and language of the people in the colonies are of utmost importance. He has noticed that the language and culture of the indigenous people of Africa and Latin America are about to become extinct in the face of coercion and highhandedness of the colonial language and culture and French or Spanish or English has been predominant there. This is why. Ngugi has sought to abrogate colonial language or languages and to reread and rewrite the colonial writings. This rereading and rewriting express his attitude to protest and dissent against colonialist aggression of indigenous cultural wealth of the colonies. His *River Between* (1965) is an express product of this protest attitude Ngugi had long cherished before his publication of *Decolonizing Mind*.

Edward Said has endorsed Ngugi’s intention and attempt to build anti-colonial

cultural resistance. But he rejects abrogation of the colonial language and culture and has recommended to alter and make them consistent to social and cultural contexts of the locality and then to make the counter-culture against colonial culture. He thinks that Salman Rushdie is successful in performing this work in his *Midnight's Children*. Said contends that Rushdie has compelled the West to recognize the East. In the hands of Rushdie this East is restructured and it is restructured by the discourses of the West. So, instead of obrogation of colonial culture and languages Said intends to build counter-culture or culture of resistance which repudiates orthodox nativism and extremist nationalism hindering the process of decolonization. Said is of opinion that it is an imperative to rediscover the nature of imperialist domination and repression, deformation and defamation of the history and culture of the indigenous nations and then to build a solid foundation of decolonization. For this purpose he asserts, we should have to work with tradition, language, history and literature of different nations and again, customs and conventions, rituals and social practices as prevalent in various societies and in various parts of them are required to be involved to this attempt. In his *Culture and Imperialism* published in 1993, Said lays emphasis on the deep inquiry into the different roots of South Asian culture and literature which entail multi-cultural dimension, and in this attempt he himself comes closer to sub-altern study group.

### **10.2.2 Homi K. Bhaba and Theory of Postcolonialism**

Homi K. Bhaba is an important thinker of postcolonialism. Bhaba is influenced by the ideas, observations and conceptual innovations advanced by Jack Lacan, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. Bhaba has introduced the concepts and ideas like hybridity, displacement, ambivalence, unhomely etc in the realm of the theory of postcolonialism and these ideas and concepts have led the theory to gain more richness and intricacy as well.

What Bhaba has told in his *Location of Culture* (1994) and *Of Mimicry and Man* (1984) and elsewhere is that the imperialist powers have brought various changes in the realm of language, education, culture and life-processes of the people in the colonies. The primary objectives of this change-effort were to establish colonies and to consolidate their all-round hold upon there. Introduction of western education and system of knowledge by the colonizers has produced a peculiar oscillation and ambivalence in society, which is an outcome, as Bhaba argues, of hybridization. Introduction of western culture in non-western colonies gives birth to a peculiar

amalgum of cultures and identities. The age-old social customs and conventions, habits and symbols prevalent in indigenous societies are moved by new ideas and they take a mixed form. The oscillating and ambivalent colonized people who were influenced by mixed cultural ideas and practices embrace the critical existence that is resulted from the mutual cultural contagion. Bhaba is of opinion that the colonizers are not immune from hybridization or from the effects of it. But the ambivalence resulted from this hybridization creates much more problem for the anti-colonial movement as it creates deep doubt as to which direction it will be organized and guided. But, as Bhaba contends, despite this problem and despite strong surveillance of the colonial rulers, the local people have tried to speak out following their own direction and intent. The colonizers have become not always successful to bring power or the discourses of power under their absolute control and, for this reason, as Bhaba observes, the hybrid identity built through the mutual interaction and subtle intimacy between the two cultures has challenged the cultural supremacy of the colonizers. The purpose and desire guiding the colonizers to construct the 'other' against the 'self' have not been completely successful. The so called subjects of the colonies have become vocal and active and ignored the vigilant and all-pervading watch of the colonizers. Bhaba opines that when the hybridized colonized existing in the realm of ambivalence rewrite the colonial narrative, that rewriting does not necessarily become an irrelevant and pointless duplicate. This rewriting definitely carries the inkling of the change of time and change of the fate of those who are called the subjects. This rewriting obviously hastens the process of decolonization.

According to Bhaba, hybridity or hybridization is no any negative fact or a negative force. Rather it identifies the presence or representation particularly of the people of the colonies through their interaction with the aliens. Hybridization does not mean the decay and devastation of the old forms of cultural ideas and practices. In several parts of several colonies deep inquiry into and exercises in age-old community life, community literatures and different community cultural forms were found pervasively and this tradition has been formidable there in the post-colonial period. The enormous diversity as represented by those age-old cultural forms seems to constitute a treasure of gems and diamonds which are now used to make new narratives of mass interest. Hybridization has, in fact, given birth to a certain kind of double consciousness. This double consciousness does not exist only among the colonized in the periphery, it exists even in ideas and activities of the colonizers of the centre, and as a result of it, the colonial identity, the colonial administration and

the colonial edifice have been nativized and rift and tension are produced within the structure of power. So hybridization, as Bhaba argues, can be said to be responsible for the mutual transculturation of the colonizer and the colonized. It leaves neither the colonized nor the colonizers to remain in pure, rather it forges inter-civilizational contiguity between masters and the so-called slaves in the colonial non-west.

In postcolonial discussion, imitation or mimicry is an important concept. Frantz Fanon in his *Black Skin, White Masks*, mentioned that at the time of carnival held in the Carribean region, the black slaves were given the permission to use white masks. The blacks used to exhibit caricatures using the white masks. Fanon tells that fairly a good number of Carribean blacks had used this practice and wanted to become similar to the white. The colonial power used to induce the local blacks to imitate the language, culture, habits and practices of the colonizers for the actual purpose of downgrading the local people and for estranging them from their own culture and own identity. The condition, the colonialists wanted to create by this effort, is the condition of coloniality which was required to expedite the cultural and psychological fall of the colonized leading them to welcome and enfold the culture of the alien.

Homi Bhaba in his *Mimicry and Man* has elaborated the idea of Fanon. We know that Michel Foucault in his *Discipline and Punish* has observed that the ruling class seeks elsewhere to expand the net of surveillance in order to consolidate and deepen its absolute power elsewhere in society. To get all ideas and activities under the umbrella of its power and authority and also to crush the anti-government protest movements or even such voices, the ruling power strengthens the net of watch and vigilance upon the people. Bhaba, who is heavily influenced by this Foucauldian idea of power-consolidation of the ruler, observes that the colonial rulers seek to make new habits, taste and all other socio-cultural practices of the colonized on the model and pattern of the colonizers through their act of surveillance and constant vigilance. The western rulers want the colonized to become alienated from their age-old habits and belief-system, social norms and values and practices, and they (the colonized) would become the followers of the westerners through imitation or mimicry. For the purpose of expanding and strengthening imperialism in the vast length and breadth of British India, Macauley in his *Minute on Indian education* (1835) sought to grow a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect. But in Location of power, Bhaba argues that the colonial rulers intended to make the colonial subjects into reformed and recognizable mass



through mimicry or mimicking the westerners and they even used to accept and regard them as 'almost the same, but not quite'. Bhaba strongly opines in this context that this attitude of the colonizers is fundamentally humiliating and this colonial attitude proves post-Enlightenment civility as being devoid of its essence, honesty, humanity and universality. But mimicry itself, as Bhaba emphasizes, is not altogether devoid of political meaning. The parts of ideas and experiences gathered in the process of mimicry promote and enrich the anti-colonial texts and it results in the expansion of the scope of or the space for anti-colonialism and decolonization.

### **10.2.3 Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak and the Theory of Postcolonialism**

Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak is one of the resourceful thinkers in the continuing discussion and debate on postcolonialism. Spivak is equally influenced by Marxism and deconstruction discourse of Jacques Derrida. Again she has deep exercise into and curious academic pulling for sub-altern history.

In her *A Critique of Post-Colonial Reason*, published in 1999, Spivak has mentioned that the non-westerners have been described as the uncivilized and barbaric in most of the metaphysical writings of the West. Spivak has given particular emphasis on 'difference', a subject she thinks very important in postcolonial discussion. She admits the relevance of Said's *Orientalism* and considers it as the 'source-book' of postcolonial study. She observes that Said is correct when he opines that the western orientalist had described the non-western world as ignorant, primitive and backward from a totalizing point of view. But the idea and concept of the East Said has built against the western construction of it have been done from similar totalizing stand-point and it does not go beyond the bound of grand narrative neglecting difference, heterogeneity and plurality with which a society, be it western or eastern, modern or backward, is grown and exists. Perhaps for translating 'Of Grammatology' of Derrida into English Spivak is found very consistent and categorical in asserting the view that all discursive endeavours necessarily involve multiple conflicts and contradiction, multiple dimensions and multiple meanings. As she argues, the East involves, reflects and represents enormous differences; life and living here go along several directions and towards several goals. And, hence, she contends that the experience of colonial domination over and exploitation of various resources is not homogeneous and the orientation of the attempt of discussion, analysis of and theorization on this colonial domination and exploitation can not be unilinear and totalizing but multi-dimensional and pluralistic in nature.

Spivak also throws light on the relationship between postcolonialism and feminism. In postcolonial study it is thought that the women are oppressed by and under the domination of the men. Spivak thinks it appropriate or correct, but in addition to it what she wants to say is that the women in colony are doubly subjugated and doubly dominated and herein lies the difference between the European women and women in the colonies. European women are subjugated and dominated only by the patriarchy of the home country, but the women in the colonies are subjugated and dominated by the two fold patriarchy-one of the home country and the other of the imperial or colonial country. For this reason particularly, the European women and the European feminists cannot represent the women of the third world which was once colonized. The European women and the European feminists are immune from the experience of coloniality or colonial exploitation, domination and persecution. So the European feminist discourse, Spivak strongly observes, is not adequate, complete and universally acceptable, and, for this reason, she, in her paper entitled *French Feminism in an International Frame*, (1987), strongly criticizes 'About Chinese Women', an work by Julia Kristeva on the plight of the Chinese women. Identifying the marks of coloniality existent in Kristeva, Spivak argues that she has penned on the Chinese women without having an adequate understanding of their real plight or its history.

Gayatri Chakrabarty Spivak has highlighted on the problems of representation by the sub-altern. She, in her essay entitled *Can the sub-altern Speak?* (1988), has raised the question about whether the sub-altern can exhibit their vocal existence or can raise their voice signifying their existence or not. Spivak observes that the postcolonial theorists undergoing schooling in and orientation to western mode and system of so-called modern education and learning have come forward to raise the narrative of grief and suffering and also displeasure and agitation of the sub-altern women and they want, thus, to represent them. But she finds no fundamental sympathy and sensitivity immanent in western knowledge, culture and epistemology by virtue of which any scholar oriented to that knowledge and culture can reach the sub-altern become one of them and understand their voice. Rather Spivak finds insurmountable and huge gap between listening to and voicing of the sub-altern, because the curious scholar wishing to understand the sub-altern and to represent them and the sub-altern themselves are mutually 'other' to each other; and since they do not belong to the same knowing race and community, the people belonging to the sub-altern category or class are, as they appear, speechless and unrepresented. In this analysis, Spivak

also expresses her strong belief and opinion that the women within this sub-altern class or social category are more sub-altern than the normal sub-altern for the reason that the place where they live or exist in sub-altern society is shadelessly dark, a place absolutely unreachable for a narrator wishing to make enlightened, rational, human, modern and universal narrative.

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### **10.3 Features of the Theory of Postcolonialism**

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Postcolonialism is a multi-dimensional and inter-disciplinary approach to the study of socio-economic, cultural and political phenomena. It consists of various thoughts and ideological waves like Marxism, postmodernism and post-structuralism. It is found that Marx, Gramsci, Lyotard, Foucault, Derrida and also the scholars of the sub-altern school have their varying direct and indirect impacts upon the writers developing postcolonial discursive theory or literary works along postcolonial orientation. So from varying and sometimes mutually unstructured and contending standpoint the postcolonial thinkers have discussed the psychology, values, thoughtful thinking reflected in education and learning, art and literature, habits and persuasions and effort of institution-building and political governance of the people and nations once colonized, and they put forward an unstructured theory we call postcolonialism.

Secondly, postcolonialism broadly tends to reject modernist meta-narrative or grand narrative. According to the opinion of the postcolonial thinkers meta-narratives or grand narratives are prone to become fundamentalist, totalizing and hence seeks dominance over all kinds of socio-political, cultural and epistemological diversity and plurality. Most of the grand narratives in the sphere of education, culture and social and political thinking, the postcolonialist thinkers observe, are grown centering on the post-Enlightenment Europe, and, for this reason, postcolonialism is basically a critique of Eurocentrism which depicts Europe as matured, civilized, developed and progressive and denounces the non-western people and their society and civilization as immatured, barbaric, primitive and backward.

Thirdly, postcolonialism and post-colonial literatures and other socio-political writings and analyses are directly and indirectly associated with anti-colonial protest and movement for decolonization. Frantz Fanon was the first powerful thinker who most formidably described how the western colonizers used to destroy education, knowledge, culture and civilization of the colonial subjects; and they valorized their own education and culture to legitimize and institutionalize imperial and colonial

rule. *Black Skin White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, two important works of Fanon had tremendous impacts on the subsequent proliferation of postcolonial writings of the latter days.

Edward W. Said in his *Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism* in particular observes that European orientalism and European knowledge have humiliated and degraded deliberately the East. European knowledge and culture is inseminated by racialism and it expresses egoistic power to occupy the mental, psychological and cultural resources of people of the colonies. Western orientalism, Said opines, is the subtle design for establishing domination over society, polity, economy and mind of the East. It depicts the East as idle, idiotic, idyllic, impoverished and inferior while the West, is rational, progressive, humane and superior. In western orientalism, the West is the 'self' while the East is 'other'. The othering stereotypes tend to recognize and consider the East as similar and homogeneous. Said has criticized this totalizing European narrative on the society, culture and politics of the orient.

Fourthly, it is reflected in the postcolonial writings that western 'othering' has failed to take into consideration the enormous heterogeneity and plurality as prevalent and implicit in 'other'. The scheme of western otherings unilaterally assumes that the West is ordered, rational, masculine and good and consistent while the East or the non-West is chaotic, irrational, feminine and bad and inconsistent. This grand narrative of cultural colonialism is an expedient means of colonization and institutionalization of colonization.

Fifthly, the binary concept of centre and periphery has acquired importance in postcolonial thinking. In colonial education, culture and epistemology, Britain and France in particular, constitute the 'centre' and the whole of non-West, is known as the 'periphery'. Although the concept relating to centre-periphery division was grown with the colonization project of Britain in the seventeenth century, it becomes fashionable, powerful and far more relevant when English language and literature were introduced for 'civilizing' the natives in the nineteenth century for colonial reason. Colonial narratives presumably project the people in the centre as the natural occupant of political, economic, cultural and psychological resources of the people in the periphery by virtue of their racial and cultural superiority. And because of harsh and pervasive domination and hegemonic surveillance imposed upon people in the periphery their free voice is hardly heard and they get speechless. In her postcolonial writing Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak has offered a very interesting

discussion about how the sub-altern loses their ability to speak about themselves in a socio-cultural and political regime which is not their own but owned by the elite in the centre.

Sixthly, the postcolonial socio-political and literary writings have sought to express and analyse the nature of western domination over non-western people of the colonies. Fanon, Said and Homi K. Bhaba extensively write on how the people of the colonies have accepted, rejected and resisted the cultural supremacy of the colonial powers. In their writings how the cultures of both the colonizers and the colonized came to each other and got mixed and hybridized in the process of acceptance, rejection and resistance are shown. The indigenous culture as transformed through mimicking the language, symbols, values and social practices of the westerners and also through the process of hybridization, is not, in the opinion of some of the thinkers of postcolonialism, altogether a signifier of the cultural void of the colonized. On the contrary, as Said has observed and Salman Rushdie has shown in his *Midnight's Children*, it has been and can be the signifier of challenge and protest on the part of the people of the colonies against the racist European colonial hegemony who use to brag to the non-westerners about the hollowed national fall-outs of European Enlightenment like rationality, modernity and sense of progress and humanity. Homi K. Bhaba in his *Location of Culture* observes that the process of hybridization and mimicry does not annihilate the culture of the indigenous people, rather it leads to identify and assert the presence of the colonized, and it restores the cultural forms and ideas which are lost or deformed during the period of long colonial domination. Unlike Ngugi wa Thiong'O who has gone for complete abrogation of alien languages and advised his Kenyan people to cultivate literature in local Kikuyu language, the writers like Rushdie are in favour of brightening the indigenous and pre-colonial cultural elements in the context of hybridized and mixed culture. The process of hybridization and mimicry leads to grow and is capable to grow such works that reconstruct the western discourse and compel the West to recognize this new construction of the East. It is, as these writers view, an important and effective means for cultural decolonization. Said and Homi Bhaba strongly think that the indigenous people or those who seek to represent these people have language and culture the indigenous people have adopted and used should have to be changed and reconstructed in view of local socio-political and cultural context and circumstances. This effort or the outcome of this effort will facilitate the intervention of the East in the domain of the dominant discourse of the West and thus the prospect of

redevelopment of the history and content of the non-western traditions will be brightened in this process. This attempt taken or to be taken by the perceptible actors in the field history, literature, politics, art and culture is definitely an attempt of protest and resistance against cultural supremacy of the colonizers. This attempt decentres the centre and asserts the identity of the periphery.

Seventhly, in postcolonial writings we are offered various binary ideas regarding the colonizers and the colonized. These novel ideas indicate the mutually oppositional relationship between these two socio-political and cultural categories and reflect their relative status, identity and position as determined by the notion of colonialism and its culture. In the field of colonialism and colonial ideas the colonizer West and/or the westerners are depicted as the 'self', civilized, matured, progressive, rational and superior while the colonized East and / or the non-westerners as immatured, barbaric, primitive, backward, aberrant and inferior. These binaries express the antagonistic relationships particularly the colonizers built or constructed to convey their habitual hatred towards and dominance over the colonized.

Eighthly, rewriting and reconstruction of history, literary works and discourses is an important feature of postcolonialism. *The River Between* (1965) of Ngugi is the reconstruction of *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad (1899). In India, Partha Chatterjee, Amitava Ghosh and many other scholars-writers have made such attempt which is considered as a significant means for cultural decolonization. Following this trend of postcolonial rewriting of classical narratives, *Pompero* and *Calibon* of *Tempest* by William Shakespeare have been transformed in the context of decolonization process in Africa and Caribbean region during 1960s and 70s into representative of alien rule and indigenous inhabitant from their respective original identity as depicted in original text.

Ninthly, postcolonial explanation have their continuing impact upon explaining and analysing the nature and characteristics of various socio-economic and political conflicts and contradictions exist at different levels particularly of the societies belonging to the third world nation-states. Postcolonial perspective is also relevant in explaining the nature and dynamics of political relations among rich and the poor states.

Finally, postcolonial thought has been an obvious powerful inspiration for anti-colonial nationalism and anti colonial movement of the countries once colonized and now belonging to the third world. The multi-cultural and pluralist consciousness as

implicit in postcolonial thinking contains the power to guide the states now independent to fight against unequal distribution of global power and totalizing agenda of economic globalization sponsored by the big capitalist states seeking to destroy the autonomous identity and existential plurality upon which human civilization is based.

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## 10.4 Limitations of Postcolonial Perspective

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Postcolonialism or postcolonial perspective has been criticized by some scholars like Robert Young, Aijaz Ahmed and a few others. The main allegations against postcolonialism we will now discuss.

First of all, this theoretical perspective have tried to put emphasis on the political and cultural relationship between the European colonizer nations and the non-European countries once colonized on the basis of two important notions of dominance and subordination. But this theory is consistently indifferent to give emphasis on the commitment of the subjugated and unfree nations and on their stiff and difficult struggle for national liberation and for establishing 'swaraj' for them. Postcolonialism lacks in representing the narrative of multi-dimensional exploitation, pain and suffering out of oppression and persecution of the nations under the pressure of colonialism and neo-colonialism. This prespective does have no inspiration for the basic change of the socio-economic and political conditon of poor people in the poor nations in particular. This theory has failed to become a material force as it fails to grip the masses.

Secondly, the critics are of opinion that the western colonial powers did not always regard the non-western people as culturally 'other'; rather they regard them as stiff political opponents as and when they had faced their countervailing attack for autonomy and independence. Postcolonialism is not thus serious about incorporating the revolutionary intent, strong determination and resistance of the colonized 'subjects' against the colonial 'masters'.

Thirdly, the postcolonial theory is no any well-knit, structured and systematic perspective with definite message either. The protagonists and proponents of this theory are influenced by several ideological systems sometimes contending one another. Apart from it, several diversified concepts and experiences grown from the several contexts of colonization and decolonialization, the proponents have used to explain their specific position in regard to the content of this theory. It results in making this theory a bit complex for students of social and political theory.

Fourthly, postcolonial theory contains an explanation of the relationship of conflict and contradiction exist between capitalist and the former colonial powers on the one hand and the countries belonging to the third world on the other. But this explanation, as some of the critics observe, carries no any new idea; rather it may be regarded as an extension of the old Marxist theory of the relations of states found in international politics.

Fifthly, the postcolonial writings or particularly the broad pattern of their presentation are western in nature. Mostly the higher education centres in the West are their epicentre and proponents, of course barring a few, some critics argue, have introduced and supported the assimilative ideas like hybridity, mimicry, in-betweeness etc, in this theory and in the agenda of decolonization for the purpose of getting them included into or connected with the western academia. So, on the question of extinction of imperialism and colonialism and of retrieval and reestablishment of the glorious history, tradition, culture and civilization of the indigenous people this theory is not active; nor this theory talks about the needs of the people of the non-West to develop competitive attitude, skill and productivity for the purpose of their empowerment and progress.

Despite the above criticism against the postcolonial theory, we cannot altogether deny its importance. The effort it has taken to unearth and explicate the nature of cultural domination of colonialism and continuing colonialism is really significant. Distinctly this theory has shown that the occupation of mind and culture of people could weaken them and this act gets them subservient to and fervent follower of the ruler. In fact, despite various epistemological opinions and debates on the relationship between consciousness and social existence of man we find to exist in the field of social philosophy, some effective synergy between the two requires of recognition. In the context of both colonization and decolonization, several thinkers and writers of postcolonialism have discussed this subject extensively.

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## 10.5 Summing Up

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- Postcolonialism is a recent critical perspective in the study of political theory. Several thinkers and writers of postcolonialism like Frantz Fanon, Edward W. Said, Homi K. Bhaba, Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak and many others, despite diverse orientations among them, have tried to describe their broad argument within the framework of post colonialism.



- Imitations of the in that the West, and the experience of the colonial period, had tried to control and occupy the realm of mind, psychology, language and culture of the colonized for the purpose of institutionalizing the colonial rule and domination. This rule and domination have their continuing impact upon the people of the former colonies which now acquired statehood.
- Unearthing the ideological disguises behind colonization and relative significance of the process like hybridization and mimicry having their direct and indirect impact on decolonization are discussed extensively in this theory from various epistemological standpoints.
- However, some critics have identified certain limitations and this theory has rediscovers the fact that those who rule construct ideologies or discourses manufacturing consent in favour of the rulers.

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## 10.6 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. How did the West expand psychological and cultural domination over the East? Answer the question from the postcolonial perspective of political theory.
2. Make an estimate of the contribution of Edward Said to the development of postcolonial perspective.
3. Make an assesment of the postcolonial ideas of Homi K. Bhaba.
4. Discuss the general characteristics of postcolonial theory.

### Long Questions :

1. Discuss the contributions of Fanan and Eduard said to the development of post colonial theroy.
2. Point out the limitations of the postcolonial perspective.

### Short Questions :

1. What the central theme of postcolonialism?
2. How did Frantz Fanon develop the theory of postcolonialism?

3. What are the main points of discussion as advanced by Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak on the theme of postcolonialism?
4. What are main points of argument the critics have raised against postcolonial theory?

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## 10.7 Further Reading

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1. Gandhi Leela, *Postcolonial Theory : A Critical Introduction*, Oxford, New York : Columbia University Press, 1998.
2. Basu, Pradip, *Postmodernism, Marxism, Postcolonialism*, Kolkata, Avenel Press, 2010.
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8. Young, Robert, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, London : Routledge, London, 1990.

## **MODULE - 3**



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## **Unit-11 □ Democracy : The History of an Idea**

### **Classical and Modern Democracy**

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#### **Structure**

- 11.0 Objective**
- 11.1 Introduction**
- 11.2 Democracy : Its Origin**
- 11.3 Ancient Democracy**
- 11.4 Classical Democracy**
- 11.5 Contemporary Democracy**
- 11.6 Conclusion**
- 11.7 Probable Questions**
- 11.8 Further Reading**

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### **11.0 Objective**

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By reading this unit the students will be acquainted with the following:

- (a) Origin and evolution of democracy
- (b) Origin and nature of ancient democracy
- (c) Background, causes and evolution of classical democracy
- (d) Various dimensions of contemporary democracy

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### **11.1 Introduction**

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Democracy is supposed to be a modern concept ushered with the arrival of modern society. Indeed, modern democracy seems to be a gift of modern society. Modern democracy along with its different forms spread to different parts of the world with the breakdown of pre-modern societies. Elected representatives, Representative assemblies and representative governments, recognition of peoples' democratic rights, rule of law, sovereignty of parliaments, separation powers and independence of judiciary, freedom of the press—all these signify arrival of and firm foot-hold of modern democracies.

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## 11.2 Democracy : Its Origin

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However, the concept of democracy is not a totally new and unknown concept in pre-modern times and an exclusive contribution of modern era. It actually appeared in pre-modern societies also. The term 'democracy' first appeared in ancient Greek political and philosophical thought and its first formal expression was found in the city-state of Athens during classical antiquity. But again, invention and usage of the term 'democracy' firstly in ancient Athens does not imply its non-existence in pre-Athenian period. In its rudimentary form democracy was found in the pre-historical period.

It may sound strange but the fact is that scholars have noticed existence of democracy as a form of social decision-making in primitive societies. The first form of democracy in human history is actually primitive democracy. Primitive democracy is that form of democracy that was prevalent among the primitive tribals. Actually primitive democracy was not particular form of state rule with any formal structure of debate and decision-making. Rather it signified essence of democracy in the normal day-to-day lives of the primitive people. Primitive tribal societies were marked by equality, non-subjection to other men and external authorities, participatory decision-making processes, rule of unanimity-based decisions, enforcement of decisions only by customs or general consent etc. Unlike political democracies of ancient Greek or modern periods, the decisions of the class or tribe were made by all adult members of the community and the decisions taken collectively by all adult members of the community were enforced only by custom or general consent. For these reasons, George Novack has rightly observed that "In its widest sense, democracy is as old as the first forms of human society".

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## 11.3 Ancient Democracy

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The idea of democracy was not even unknown to the ancient people of either China or India. In ancient China a persons named Zho emphasized on the importance of people and Sun Yat-Sen envisioned a republic for India. In ancient India early form of democracy was actualised through the republics. *Gana* or a *Sangha* (such as Buddhist Sangha) Sreni, Puga, or Vrata are different forms of republican politics that existed in ancient India. Although monarchy was the widely prevalent and normal form of the state, still democracy, more particularly, democratic form of institutions were not unknown in ancient India.

Democracy as a form of state rule is supposed to be a Greek invention. Democracy is in origin a Greek word. The word 'democracy' is actually composed of two words—One is 'demos' which means the whole citizen body living within a particular polis, or city-state and the other one is 'Kratos' which means either 'power' or 'rule'. In this sense democracy becomes rule of the people. It may be mentioned here that about 422 B.C. Cleon said: "...That shall be democratic which shall be of the people, by the people, for the people".

It is usually thought that democracy was by origin an European concept as it is believed to have originated in ancient Greek city-state of Athens. Athens is believed to be the birthplace of democracy. Actually it was not Athens but Chios in Ionia which was the first Greek city to tread the path to democracy and that was in as early as in the second quarter of the sixth century B.C. There were free institutions in Chios between 575-550 B.C. There existed some kind of democratic norms and free institutions in Chios.

The desire for democracy which found feeble expression in Chios in the sixth century B.C., got a solid foothold in Athens in the 5th century B.C. The Greek city-state of Athens (which also included both Athens and Attica) may be described as the first known democracy in the world. From the 9th to the 5th centuries B.C., Athens completed the full cycle from monarchy to democracy. In this process the power of the nobility was broken up and developed a political system based on practice of adopting and enacting legislation and executive bill through democratic procedures.

Athenian statesman Solon laid the foundation for Athenian democracy. Solonial reforms ensured the rights of all Athenian citizens to participate in Assembly (Ecclesia) meetings. All citizens were entitled to attend the general Assembly, which became the sovereign body, entitled to pass laws and decrees, elect officials, and hear appeals from the most important decisions of the courts. Every citizen was entitled to attend and speak at its meetings. Decisions were taken through voting either by show of hands or by secret ballot. Another democratic body was the Boule. It was the official executive body. It was a group of 500 men. 50 from each of ten Athenian tribes, who served on the Council for one year. It met every day. Its function was of supervisory nature. The Boule was less powerful than the Assembly but more dignified than the Assembly.

Notable features of the Athenian democracy were its deliberative and participatory nature. It was deliberative democracy in the sense that there existed in the Ecclesia (Assembly) free atmosphere of public discussion and lively debate both on domestic

and foreign policies. At the same time, it was a particular form of participatory democracy. Participatory democracy means that particular form of democracy where citizens can directly participate in the decision-making processes of the state. As R. H. Soltan has observed in his *Introduction of Politics* : “The Greek city-states were indeed democratic in the participation of all citizens, not only in the election of officials but in the daily routine of administration and justice...”. The Athenian democracy was indeed a vibrant, direct and participatory democracy. S. Hornblower, in an essay entitled *Creation and Development of Democratic Institutions in Ancient Greek*, has explained peculiarity of the system of participatory democracy as developed and prevailed in Athens. He said: “What resulted was a system of participatory democracy which combined a complexity and sophistication of political detail on the one hand (including a very severe attitude to individual accountability), with the principle of almost total amateurism in the other, in a marriage which remains unprecedented to this day.”

The type of democracy prevalent in ancient Greek city-states especially in Athens had some salient features. Firstly, unlike the primitive democracy, it was political democracy. Political democracy arose by way of doing away with primeval democracy. As regards political democracy it may be said as George Novack has pointed out : “Political democracy is a form of state rule—and the state is a product of the cleavage of society into opposing classes.” Secondly democracy in Greek city-states especially the Athenian democracy was participatory in nature and marked by participation of all freeman in the common affairs of the city-states. Thirdly, it was deliberative in nature, in the sense, freedom was attempted and it was marked by an atmosphere of free discussion to arrive at public decisions. Fourthly, there was general respect for laws and for the established procedures of the community. Fifthly, it was based on some basic democratic ideas and ideals. The Athenian political ideals were active citizenship, equality among citizens, liberty, respect for the laws and justice and politics as a collective and rational enterprise. Sixthly, at the base of all these features, there remained a general sense and urge for collectively, cohesiveness and solidarity. Actually, in Athenian democracy, public decisions were collectively taken. The purpose of political participation and taking part in the debates in the Assembly by the citizens (i.e. freeman) was to achieve cohesiveness and solidarity.

However, its limitations cannot be overlooked. Although its deliberative and participatory nature have been overemphasized overlooking the other side of the coin. As a matter of fact, the right to participate in the election of officials and in the daily routine of administration of justice were confined among a small number of



citizens, excluding ‘foreigners’ (i.e. fellow Greeks from other communities), and slaves. Pointing out this aspect of the Athenian democracy Prof. S. Mukherjee and Prof. S. Ramaswamy have said : “It is argued that the Athenian democracy was essentially incomplete and exclusive for it excluded women, resident aliens (metics) and slaves from the democratic process and treated few alone as free”. One particular limitation was its class nature. The Athenian society was a slave society as slavery was prevalent there. Most importantly, slaves, an integral part of the then Athenian society, were excluded from all kinds of political participation. Actually, they were deprived from all kinds of basic human rights. It was actually a democracy of the so called ‘free’ people of the society and as such a truncated form of democracy. According to Aristotle, it was based on false assumption of equality. Both Pericles and Aristotle defined it as the supremacy of the many over the few.

Decline of the Athenian polis and the rise of Rome did not make much headway in the direction of development of democratic political system. The Romans initially embraced Athenian democratic principles. Although Roman political system was not purely democratic, however, the Senate, the Council (Councilum) and the Assembly were important political institutions of ancient Rome. Rome’s contribution was confined in laying the ground-work for a system of civil and criminal law, establishment of a universal code of law, granting citizenship rights to the slaves etc. Although the Roman’s invented the idea of secret ballot, the Romans could not lay the foundation of a real democracy. Authoritarianism was more pronounced in the Roman political tradition. The participation of citizens in the governmental process was only formal. The Roman political system, rather than being purely democratic, was, in reality, a mixture of kingship, aristocracy and democracy.

Thus, the Romans did not make much contribution to the development of the concept democracy as was noticed in the case of Greeks. Democracy in Greece in general and in Athens in particular was incomplete and exclusive in nature. Still, they are remembered as “historical forerunner of all subsequent democracies in the world”. As Antony Arblaster observes : “For the Greeks did not merely invent the concept of democracy. The concept was devised, or evolved, to describe an evolving reality—the kind of city-state in which the citizen body did actually govern itself.”

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## 11.4 Classical Democracy

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Modern democracy is, as opposed to ancient democracy, a newer form of democracy which originated and took shape in a new social context. Two distinct

phases of modern democracy may be identified. The first one may be regarded as classical democracy and the second one as contemporary democracy.

Actually, classical democracy had originated in ancient Greece. Democracy was practiced as a form of state rule in the city-state of Athens in 5th Century B.C. But the modern form of classical democracy can be traced back to the 17th century Europe. New social context, newer type of socio-economic activities, urges and expectations led to the rise and growth of modern democratic thinking and associated political practices. Different revolutionary movements in Europe and America, rise of capitalism and rising expectations of the new social classes, arrival of new socio-political concepts like individualism, liberalism, individual freedom created favourable situation for the rise and growth of democracy both as a concept and as a form of state rule. Essentially, birth of modern democracy is a result of far reaching socio-economic changes as well as changes in outlook and world-view.

In this context, it may be said that the Middle Ages in Europe is generally regarded as the 'Dark Age' in human history. It was marked by absence of free-thinking, individualism, rationality as well as democracy. The political thought of the middle ages was curious combination of theology and scholastic philosophy, universalism, the theory of Two Swords, tug-of-war between the ecclesiastical and the secular schools etc. Moreover, the theory of kingship, not the concept of democracy, gradually gained ground in the middle ages which, however, was a curious mixture of absolutism, contractualism and celestialism. However, there were sporadic existence of democratic governances in the middle ages particularly in the 'free' communes in the urban republics of medieval Italy, France, Germany and in Holland and Belgium. But these were exceptions to the overall undemocratic atmosphere of the middle ages Europe.

The emergence of indirect, representative liberal democracy can be traced back from the mid-17th Century. It emerged from the ashes of absolutism in the late 17th century. Establishment of modern democracy took place over three hundred years starting from the rise of the Dutch Republic in the 16th century and extending upto the American Civil War of the mid-20th century. This development coincided with the formative stages of capitalism. Naturally there was a close interconnection between the formation and growth of capitalism and the arrival of modern liberal representative democracy.

It was a period of great revolutionary changes. 'Six great upheavals' marked the period from the Dutch revolution to the American Civil War. George Novack in his

'Democracy and Revolution' has pointed out that "During the the formative stages of capitalism, six great upheavals marked the decisive steps in the forward march of the bourgeois-democratic revolution." These great upheavals were: (1) The Dutch Revolution of the late 16th century, (2) the English Revolution of the 17th century, (3) the Revolt of the American Colonists, (4) The French Revolution, (5) The February Revolution of 1948 in Europe, and (6) The American Civil War of the mid-19th century. George Novack cites all these historically significant upheavals to substantiate his main point of view that : "Democracy was everywhere the offspring of revolution."

Two interrelated processes helped developing modern democratic system of governance and its theoretical justification. The first one was the far-reaching socio-economic changes associated with the disintegration of feudalism and simultaneous growth of capitalism in Europe. These resulted in the creation of necessary preconditions for the origin and growth of modern democratic system. The second one was the contributions of several eminent political and philosophical thinkers whose writings served and supplied necessary justification for the germinating democratic system. Necessary doctrinal support for rising democracy could be traced in the writings of several thinkers like John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu, David Hume, Adam Smith, Ricardo, Thomas Paine, Edmund Burke, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson and others.

As against absolutism and divine source of royal authority, writers like George Buchanan, the most profound intellectual of sixteenth century Scotland, and others developed the concept of popular sovereignty. They contended that it was the people who were the ultimate source of law and that the Prince was created for the subjects. The doctrine of popular sovereignty laid the basis for democracy. Other important contributions of social and political thinkers enriching the concept of democracy were—faith in constitutionalism, rule of law, individual freedom and rights, toleration and right to dissent, pluralism, limited power, seperation of power, faith in liberalism and individualism.

All these ideas which were associated with the growth of practice and cocept of democracy, however, did not appear at the same time and at the same place. The important contributions of the 17th century towards the development of the concept of democracy were individualism and liberalism. In the 17th century, the demand for democracy was intimately connected with individualism and liberalism. Individualism was a social theory favouring freedom of action for individual over collective or state

control. It was urgently needed for free enterprise and the pursuit of profit of rising middle classes and associated with laissez faire economy. Laissez faire economy needed abstention by government from interfering in the workings of the free market. Seventeenth century democracy was also intimately connected with a notion of liberalism. Liberalism was a political and moral philosophy. Liberalism was based on liberty, consent of the governed, and equality before the laws. John Locke was an early exponent of liberalism and individualism. In his *Second Treatise on Civil Government* he argued for right to life, liberty and property as inseparable and natural rights of individual and the central liberal outlook were crystallized in his writings.

Some revolutionary upheavals occurred in the 18th century. 18th century experienced revolutionary upheavals like the American Revolution (1776), the French Revolution (1789) and the Industrial Revolution (from 1760 onwards). Along with these revolutionary upheavals, scientific and technological changes of revolutionary nature resulted in the creation congenial atmosphere for the growth of democracy. Liberty, equality and fraternity—the motto of the French Revolution, attracted the masses. Montesquieu, Rousseau, Bentham became the chief exponents of democratic ideals in the 18th century. Montesquieu wanted to protect individual freedom from all powerful government and he articulated the theory of separation of powers between the three organs of government. He wanted a democratic and republican political system that would safeguard individual from tyrannical government. Rousseau felt that man was born free but everywhere he was in chains. He believed that good government must have the freedom of all its citizens as its most fundamental objectives. He argued for direct democracy and equality. Bentham, an English philosopher and political radical and an exponent of utilitarianism and legal positivism, was also a liberal democrat. His ideas influenced the development of welfarism and was based on egalitarian principles.

As a result of their contributions along with the impact of the Industrial Revolution the French Revolution and the Enlightenment created atmosphere favourable to the growth of democratic thinking. The French revolution popularised the notion of the sovereignty of the people. The notion of the sovereignty of the people actually became the basis for the concept of ‘popular sovereignty’ which is thought to be a cardinal point of democratic ideology. Moreover, the Enlightenment of the late 17th and 18th centuries emphasized reason and individualism. Along with happiness, nature, progress, reason it also emphasized on liberty and individual freedom. The notions of rationality and individual freedom were associated with the notion of democracy.

### **Advancement of Democracy in the 19th Century**

The 19th century experienced further advancement of democratic theory and practice. The notion of the sovereignty of the people which was popularized after the French Revolution, in the 19th century, took a concrete shape in the form of 'Popular Sovereignty'. Its intellectual roots can be traced back to 17th and 18th century European political philosophy but the American Revolution resulted in a government based on popular sovereignty. Here one finds the first large-scale establishment of this concept. Stephen A. Douglas, a U. S. politician and leader of the Democratic Party espoused the cause of popular sovereignty in relation to the issue of slavery in the territories before the American Civil War (1861-1865).

John Stuart Mill, the most influential British thinker of the 19th century, was also one of the most influential thinkers in the history of classical liberalism. Mill was a liberal individualist thinker and fully supportive of democracy. His considerations on Representative Government combined enthusiasm for democratic government with pessimism as to what democracy was likely to do. He supported representative government but his support was not unconditional. He considered it as ideally the best only because there is no other better alternative. He thought that despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians. Mill's essay *On Liberty* is regarded as the most famous vindication of freedom of thought and freedom of conduct.

However, Mill was afraid of majoritarianism. His regards for minority opinion and fear of mob mind and of the tyranny of the crowd is well-expressed in his *On Liberty*. As C.E.M. Joad points out : "He insisted upon the extension of this freedom to 'cranks', on the ground that, while nine cranks out of ten are harmless idiots, the tenth is of greater value to the mankind than all the normal men who seek to suppress him." Like John Stuart Mill, another 19th century thinker, Alexis de Tocqueville was also afraid of Majoritarianism. He observed that "... In America the majority raises formidable barriers around the liberty of opinion; within these barriers an author may write what he pleases, but woe to him if he goes beyond them." [*Democracy in America*, Volume-1, Chapter-XV, (1835)]. He emphasized participation as the hallmark of democracy and it is infinitely connected to the idea of political liberty.

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## **11.5 Contemporary Democracy**

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Contemporary democracy has exhibited different, and sometimes contradictory, trends. On the one hand, there have been spread of democracy and democratic rights

and, on the other hand, repeated restrictions and threat to democratic societies. Some of the notable tendencies are:

- (1) **Spread of democracy** : In the 20th century democratic political system spread to the different corner of the Globe. It was not longer restricted to the continent of Europe and America. In the post-second World War period, it spread to other places particularly to the newly-independent states of Asia and Africa. For example, independent India could establish herself as the largest democracy in the world.
- (2) **Extension of adult suffrage** : In the 20th century, universal adult franchise was implemented in the true sense of the term. Previously it was universal manhood suffrage and that too was circumscribed by certain specific considerations. In different countries right to vote was not extended to women, propertyless, and non-white people. In Great Britain in 1918, in USA in 1920, in Australia in 1902, right of women to vote was guaranteed. In France until 1944, Greece until 1952, and Switzerland until 1971, women were not given the right to vote. In Australia, although recognised women's right to vote in 1902, did not extend the right to vote to Aboriginal Australian until 1962. In apartheid-era South Africa, non-white people could generally not vote in national election until the first multi-party election in 1994. In this process, adult franchise gradually turned to universal adult franchise by guaranteeing the right of almost all adults to vote in political election.
- (3) **Human Rights** : Universal Declaration of Human Rights is another important achievement of the 20th century. It can be considered as a milestone towards strengthening the process of spreading and uplifting democracy to a newer height. It was adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights contain 30 Article. In addition to that, the United Nation General Assembly in 1955 authorised two covenants, one relating to Civil and Political Rights, and other to Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Both these Covenants became efficitive in January 1976.
- (4) **Theoretical exercises** : Democracy seems to be an ever-evolving process. It evolved both in practice and in theory. There have several attempts to theoretically apprehend the evolution of democracy in practice and to develop different conceptual frameworks.

- (a) One such attempt was made by Samuel Huntington who identified the three waves of democratization, Periodization of these three waves are : (i) 1828 to 1920; (ii) 1943 to 1962; and the last quarter of the 20th century.
- (b) Various concepts of democracy has been developed to conceptualize and depict the nature of democracy. Among these concepts mention may be made of (i) concept of procedural democracy; (ii) substantive democracy, (c) deliberative democracy, (d) sustainable democracy, etc.
- (c) Another trend of contemporary democratic thinking is construction of various models of democracy. Two distinct models of liberal democracy are protective democracy and developmental democracy. Jeremy Bentham and John Mill were the champions of protective democracy whereas the concept of developmental democracy is found in the writings of John Stuart Mill. There are few other models of democracy such as : (i) Participatory Model (two forms of this model are plebiscitary democracy and pluralist democracy; (ii) Model of Democratic Autonomy as propounded by David Held; and (iii) Marxist Model as found in various versions of Marxism.

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## 11.6 Conclusion

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Our discussion on democracy suggests that democracy is an ever evolving process which evolved both in theory and practice. According different conceptual frameworks have been developed by scholars at different point of time to appreciate the true meaning of the concept.

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## 11.7 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Trace the origin and development of Democracy.
2. Write a note on Ancient Democracy.
3. Trace the evolution of classical democracy from 17th to 19th century.

### Long Questions :

1. Write a note on Athenian democracy.

2. Describe the background and causes that prompted the growth of classical democracy.
3. Analyse the major trends of contemporary democracy.

**Short Questions :**

1. What is meant by primitive democracy?
2. What, according to George Novack, are 'Six great upheavals'?
3. Write a note on the advancement of democracy in the 19th century.

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## **11.8 Further Reading**

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1. Anthony Arblaster : *Democracy, World View*, (Benestve : Open University, Press, 1994)
2. C. B. Macpherson : *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*, Oxford, OUP, 1977.
3. George Novack, *Revolution and Democracy*, New York, Pathfinder Press, INC, 1971.
4. S. Mukherjee and S. Ramaswamy : *Democracy in Theory and Practice*, Delhi, Macmillan, 2005.



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## **Unit-12 □ Debates on Democracy**

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### **Structure**

- 12.0 Objective**
- 12.1 Introduction**
- 12.2 Debates on Democracy**
- 12.3 Direct vs Indirect Democracy**
- 12.4 Democracy and People's Participation**
- 12.5 Means vs Ends**
- 12.6 Procedural vs Substantive**
- 12.7 Democracy and Human Rights**
- 12.8 Conclusion**
- 12.9 Probable Questions**
- 12.10 Further Reading**

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### **12.0 Objective**

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By reading this unit the students will be acquainted with the following:

- (a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with the nature of debates on democracy.
- (b) Various issues of debate.
- (c) The issues between procedural and substantive concept of democracy.
- (d) The relation between democracy and human rights.

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### **12.1 Introduction**

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Democracy is the primary form of modern government today. It is also claimed to be the best form of government. Churchill once said “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.” Does this observation hold true till today? or, on the contrary, is democracy the best form of government.

No doubt, democracy has certain points in its favour. It is claimed to be government of the people, by the people and for the people. This a very naive definition of democracy. As against this, it is said that “Modern conceptions of democracy are based on the fundamental ideas of popular sovereignty and collective decision making which in which rulers through various ways are held to account by those over whom they rule.” Democracy recognises rights and freedoms of individual, respects and promotes human rights, establishes people’s control over decision-making process, brings transparency in public affairs. It is a form of government based on people’s participation and deliberation. It materialises the dream of representation of citizens and universal participation and ensures accountability of leaders. On the one hand, it provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts, on the other hand had, it establishes a responsible and accountable government. Transparency, peaceful conflict-management, correction of mistakes, establishment of a free and just society with enhanced dignity of citizens—all these are achievable aims and objectives of a democratic society and governmental system.

But democracy is not unmixed blessing. It has its own drawbacks. It is often said that democracy is the government of the innocent, incompetent and ignorant. Most of the citizens neither have interest nor the ability to grasp the complexities of modern democratic government. For successful working of a democratic government, some sort of idealism, involvement, deliberation and participation, courage, honesty and integrity, dedication, vigilance are required both from the leaders and the ordinary citizens which are however lacking in most cases. It can be fruitful if there is an unbiased and courageous media and independent judicial system unrelentingly committed to fair justice and democratic values. In the absense of these conditions, democratic system turns to be a very insipid and formal. Again, it may be untable form of government. In a democracy leaders keep changing sides which leads to instability. This is which is termed as ‘horse-trading’ and ‘politics of Ayaram-Gayaram’ that leads to instability and may be viewed as a mockery of people’s verdict. In a democracy, decision-making process is rather cumbersome and time-consuming leading to delays even with regard to many vital issues of public life. Moreover, in a democracy, peoples’ representatives, elected for a definite term of period, are often detached from their electorates. Thus, decisions taken by the representative bodies do not always reflect the opinion and will of the citizens. Politics of power and money are great hindrances in the way of establishing people’s government.

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## 12.2 Debates on Democracy

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Democracy has great appeal to almost all sections of people. It has a charming impact on ordinary people and politicians. Today, there is hardly anyone who disagrees with democracy. Still it is essentially a contested concept, and a matter of continuing debate. Since its arrival in ancient city state of Athens till today its forms, nature, end, different manifestations of democracy as well as its relation to other concepts and practices have been matters of continuing debate.

Debates on democracy as a form of government emerged at its initial and classical Athenian phase of appearance. It was viewed by thinkers like Plato and Aristotle as a system of mob rule and as a perverted or degenerated form of “rule by many”. While Plato viewed democracy as a system of mob rule at the expense of wisdom and property, Aristotle regarded democracy not as a normal form of government but as a perverted form of government. In his view, in normal form of government, power was exercised for common interest; whereas in perverted form of government, power was exercised for satisfying the interest of the ruling class. Therefore, as a form of government representing the ‘rule of many’ ‘polity’ was the normal form of government and ‘democracy’ was the perverted and degenerated form of government. Therefore, since the beginning of political thinking, the purpose of democracy as a desirable form of government was questioned and it was looked with disdain rather than with love.

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## 12.3 Direct vs Indirect Democracy

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With the development of democracy as a form of government from its ancient Athenian phase to its contemporary phase, a basic debate that has raised its head related to forms or kinds of democracy. Two basic forms of democracy that have been noticed in its entire phase of development are : direct or pure, and indirect or representative. In the ancient city-states of Greece democracy was of direct type whereas in modern times indirect or representative democracy is prevalent.

At the core of the debate between direct and indirect democracy lies the nature of relationship between the immediate sovereign and the ultimate sovereign. Direct democracy is based on the assumption that the people or the citizens of a particular state are sovereign in that state and that the sovereign power of the state should be exercised directly by themselves. They are the direct participants in the management of the public affairs. Direct democracy means power with the people and its exercise by them.

The direct form of democracy prevailed in the ancient Greek city-state of Athens. As the first major effort to realise democracy Athens established a vibrant, direct and participatory democracy. It is true that direct democracy, in its truer sense, was prevalent among the primitive tribals. This was actually primitive democracy. But it is not considered a form of state. Democracy as a form of state rule is supposed to be a Greek invention. In this sense, i.e. in the sense of a form of state rule, direct democracy was first noticed in ancient Athens. Athenian democracy was the most celebrated form of direct participatory democracy and, in practice, it signified rule of the people, by the people. The focus of the Athenian democracy was on the participatory character of democracy. All major decisions were made by the assembly to which all citizens belonged.

On the other hand, in indirect democracy people or citizens do not directly take part in the deliberative and decision-making process. Indirect democracy, like direct democracy, implies power with the people, but unlike direct democracy, its exercise is in the hands of representative chosen by them. Here people are treated not as immediate but as ultimate sovereign. The electorate is the ultimate repository of the sovereign power. Conceptually people are source of power and all powers belong to them. They wield those powers not directly but as electorates and through their elected representatives. It is the legislature, consisted of the elected representatives of the people, which formulates and expresses the will of the state. Thus, the ultimate sovereign i.e., the people transfer their sovereign power to the immediate sovereign, i.e., the elected representatives and the legislature which is composed of such representatives.

Therefore, the debate between direct and indirect forms of democracy relates to the nature of relationship between the immediate and ultimate sovereign, the methods of exercise of sovereign power as well as respective merits and demerits of both forms of democracy. But the fact is that the conditions of the modern nation-states have led to the acceptance of indirect form of democracy as an unavoidable fact. Direct democracy is inconsistent with highly populated, large modern states. Modern democracy is representative democracy as the wills of the people are actualised through their elected representatives. Today people govern themselves, not by participating directly in the decision-making process, but by sending through election their representatives to the legislature, who, by turn, would act as the decision-makers. However, some of the methods of direct democracy such initiative, referendum and recall may be accommodated, to some extent in the broader framework of indirect form of democracy.

But the act of representation of someone on behalf of others is not free from debate. J. J. Rousseau, a great proponent of direct involvement of people, was opposed to representative democracy. He insisted that to be represented is to give up—to alienate—powers that individuals alone can rightfully exercise, for him, it involves a form of slavery—a negation of 'will', one's capacity to exert influence. Similarly, D. H. Lawrence asked ... Who can represent me? – I am myself. I don't intend anybody to represent me'. On the other hand, arguments in favour of indirect representative democracy is generally supposed to be based on convenience rather its righteousness or propriety. As Anthony Arblaster has pointed out 'democracies like Paine originally put forward representation as a means of adopting the democratic principle to societies, such as the United States, which were too large to allow for personal participation by all their citizens'. He also says that 'For them it was expedient, almost a makeshift, and one that contained obvious dangers'. However, John Stuart Mill supported representative democracy not for its expediency or convenience but for its educative instrumental value. Thus, unlike Rousseau and others, John Stuart Mill considers representative democracy as capable of ensuring freedom and right of self-determination.

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## 12.4 Democracy and People's Participation

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Another contentious issue is people's participation in democratic process. Does democracy require or can democracy ensure participation of all citizens of a particular nation-state, directly or through their elected representatives, in the deliberative and democratic decision-making process? This question arises as soon as democracy is regarded as majority rule which, by implication, makes redundant or unimportant opinion and participation of some people or group of people for the democratic governmental system to continue. Before the introduction of universal adult franchise many people particularly women, uneducated and poor were deprived of voting rights. Even after its introduction, disfranchisement in various forms results in deprivation of voting right to various sections of people in many countries. Again, due to various impediments and lack of incentive or inspiration, large sections of people do not feel interested to participate in the democratic process. Disillusionment, deprivation, threat, oppression, severe inequality and sub-human existence—all these negatively effect people's participation.

Moreover, widely prevalent anti-democratic theories do not welcome people's participations in the democratic processes. Thinkers like J. S. Mill or Edmund Burke

looked at general masses with disdain as people were regarded as the common 'herd' or 'the swinish multitude'. In the modern elite theories there are deliberate attempt to keep the field of political decision-making restricted among the conflicting elitist groups. In this version of politics, mass politics is considered as anti-democratic. Walter Lippmann felt 'the need to protect the executive and judicial powers from the representative assemblies and from mass opinion...' Writers like Joseph Schumpeter, known as an eminent theorist of democratic elitism, has tried to restrict the scope of political participation in the actual decision-making process only to the elites of societies.

The elitist theory of democracy bases itself on two basic arguments: one is the nature of the decision-making process and the other one is their concept of elitist effectiveness. Firstly, decision-making is described as a process of consensus of elite positions—i.e., negotiations among various groups. Secondly, the concept of elitist supremacy is supplemented by elite effectiveness. As Antony Arblaster has observed: "The core of elite theory was the contention that democracy, in the strict traditional sense of rule by the people, is impossible: all government is government by an elite, or at best one among a number of competing elites." It attempts to limit the role of 'the masses' within the political system and redefines democracy in such a way as to eliminate its traditional participatory aspirations.

Attempts to restrict people's participation in political process is also based in other arguments which also have their origin in the elitist view of democracy. Joseph Schumpeter, in his attempt to redefine the concept of democracy, has actually undermined the participatory aspect of democracy. According to him; (a) democracy has no moral superiority as compared to other form of government and there is nothing about democracy that makes it desirable; (b) democracy is simply a 'political method' and not an end in itself. Therefore discrimination against some section of the population is not undemocratic; (c) The right to vote does not necessitate all adults in contemporary liberal societies to use this right or participate more directly in the political process; (d) as the masses are too irrational, emotional, parochial and 'primitive' to make good decision, therefore, the participation of the mass of the population is not a good idea. Actually, he is very critical of mass participation in politics. Hence, he concludes that government by the people is neither possible nor desirable. He drastically narrowed the conception of democracy. In his scheme of 'rational' selection of ruler through general elections the mass of people has little role to play on account of the proven ignorance, irrationality and apathy of the people.

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## 12.5 Means vs Ends

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There are several contending perceptions of democracy. Distinction between the minimal and maximal perceptions of democracy may be cited as one of such contending perceptions having relevance over ends-means debate on democracy. The minimal perception of democracy highlights the importance of the 'means'; whereas the maximal perception focuses both on the means and the ends of democracy.

The minimal perception emphasises on institutions and procedures of democracy. People having this perception of democracy view democracy as a set of institutions and procedures encompassing free and fair elections, legislative assemblies, and constitutional government arising out of these. Their focus is on procedures such as fair elections, respect for human right and universal suffrage. But the maximal perception of democracy includes both means and ends of democracy. It does not confine discussion on democracy only on the periphery of means but also highlights the 'end' or 'outputs' such as economic equality, justice, fairness etc. Issues relating to working of democracy and how accountability of the elected representatives are ensured draw the attention of the minimal perceptionists. Therefore their focus is on the issues like civil and political right of citizens, universal suffrage and free, fair elections as well as accountability of the people's representatives. On the other hand, maximal perception of democracy emphasises, in addition to issues related with the 'means', on issues like equality of opportunity and outcome, social rights, policy, justice, fairness, responsiveness, public safety, elimination of corruption.

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## 12.6 Procedural vs Substantive

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Another debate on democracy is connected with the procedural and the substantive conceptions of democracy. Although not entirely but to some extent, the debate regarding the procedural and the substantive conceptions of democracy is based on the arguments and the issues of the maximal and the minimal perceptions of democracy. The procedural democracy concentrate on mechanisms of democracy, whereas substantive democracy pertains to socially based value judgements.

The concept of procedural democracy is concerned with the procedural aspects of democracy. To be more specific, it concentrate and emphasizes on the procedural aspects of democracy. Therefore, it deals with the formal aspects of democracy. From the procedural point of view, democracy is viewed purely as a set of institutions and mechanisms concerning holding of free and fair elections, formation of legislative

assemblies and constitutional governments, assuring accountability of the governments and elected representative and protecting rights and liberties of the citizens. Here procedure is more important than the substance of democracy. Democracy is viewed as a 'system of institutions' or an 'institutional system' and a mechanism to select 'the men who are able to do the deciding'. As a result, people are seen simply as 'producers of governments'— i.e., merely selectors who select who would govern them.

The procedural theory or model of democracy is contrasted with the substantive theory or model of democracy. According to the substantive point of view, democracy is a society composed by truly equal citizens, who are politically engaged, tolerant of different opinions and ways of life, and have an equal voice in choosing their rulers and holding them accountable. As N. Joyal has pointed out "Democracy... should not be seen as confined to the sphere of state and government but also as the principle governing collective life in society. Substantive democracy pertains to socially based value judgements.

The basic assumption of substantive democracy is that democracy must not merely be procedurally democratic but also be functionally democratic. The state is not merely set up as a democracy but it functions as one as well. It is a form of democracy that functions in the interest of the governed. Therefore, guaranteeing right to vote and allowing all citizens of age to vote is not enough. Rather what is necessary to qualify as a substantive democracy is the meaningful exercise of the equal rights of citizenship. This has to be guaranteed to all. It must ensure a truly equal opportunity to influence governmental decisions.

Procedural democracy and substantive democracy—these two types of democracy are supposed to be opposite. Procedural democracy is regarded as formal democracy where the relevant forms of democracy exist but are not actually managed democratically. But substantive democracy is referred as a functional democracy. Procedural democracy emphasizes on free and fair elections, freedom of speech and expression, and the rule of law and its equal protection to all. But the proponents of substantive democracy argue that all these are necessary, but by no means sufficient. Merely securing legal and political equality is not enough. In a substantive democracy there must be truly equal opportunity to influence governmental decisions and democracy should be regarded as the principle governing collective life in society. In procedural democracy, in comparison to substantive democracy, people or citizens of the state is likely to have less influence. Actually it tries to restrict the scope of



political participations in the actual decision-making process only to the elites in society depriving the masses. In contrast to this, substantive democracy encourages equal participation of all groups in society in the political process.

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## 12.7 Democracy and Human Rights

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The two concepts—democracy and human rights— have a variable degree of overlap with one another. It is usually assumed that democracy includes human rights. Democracy conceives of a society which not only protect and promote human rights but also makes elaborates arrangements of formal institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights. These two are inter-related, overlapping and one includes the other.

However, there is no denying of the fact that tensions remain between theories of democracy and human rights over the degree to which one includes the other. Some writers argue that a right to democracy is a also a human right. At the basic conceptual level, these two goes hand in hand. Democratic system embodies human rights and the later is essential for the functioning of the former. One complements the other. This being the case, the problem, however, arises when it is seen from the perspectives of different theories of democracy. Different theories of democracy have different stands on human rights, although none of them completely overlook some or other aspects of human rights.

Some of the important theories of democracy are, for example, (a) procedural democracy, (b) liberal democracy and (c) social democracy. These different theories of democracy incorporate different categories of human rights. As Todd Landman has pointed out (a) Procedural democracy incorporates political rights but not civil rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, (b) liberal democracy incorporates civil and political rights but not economic, social and cultural rights, and (c) social democracy incoporates civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It amplifies that procedural definiton of democracy affords less place for human rights than social definiton. The liberal definition of democracy stands in between them.

Democracy means equality. But to be more specific it means only formal equality. Therefore, its commitment to all types of human rights and actualisation of all these rights for all of sections of people in society is not beyond question. Practically in all established democracies human rights of different sections of people are curbed and curtailed in varying degrees. The degrees to which enjoyment of those

rights are permissible are determined by various socio-economic and political parameters. Persecution on the basis of religious beliefs, political opinion and affiliation or ideological positions are not rare in today's world. As a result, democracy, instead of being a procedure and method of reflecting and acting on the basis of popular sovereignty and collective will actually act as a form of state armed with organised, systematic use of force against persons. Various sorts of electoral malpractices, bureaucratic apathies and indifferences, bias media coverage, unresponsive judicial system, repression and discrimination may, in effect, result in deprivation of human right to specific targeted sections of people.

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## 12.8 Conclusion

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As a form of government, democracy appears superior to other form of government for protecting, respecting and fulfilling human rights obligations and human rights are accepted as legal and normative standard which judge the quality of human dignity. Democracy must aimed at the removal of differences and abolition of discrimination on the grounds of caste, race, ethnicity, gender and creed. Again in multi-religious, multilingual, multicultural society, it must respect diversity and plurality. Attempt at establishing uniformity and setting a particular religion, language, culture or particular version of nationalism and choice of path for development as norm for all sections of people is dangerous trend both for democracy and human rights. Of course, this aim may not be achieved in formal democratic society. This type of society which are devoid of or deprivators of human rights to a major sections of people may be regarded as formal, not actual, democratic society. Actually, this aim can not be achieved at the expense of human rights.

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## 12.9 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Write a note on debates on democracy
2. What are the main issues of debate between direct and indirect democracy.
3. What are the widely prevalent anti democratic theories and how do they try to restrict people's participation in the democratic processes?

### Long Questions :

1. Write a note on the elitist theory of democracy.

2. Discuss the relation between democracy and human rights.
3. What do you mean by ends means debates on democracy.

**Short Questions :**

1. Why did Rousseau oppose representative democracy.
2. Write a note on direct democracy.
3. Write a note on indirect democracy.

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## **12.10 Further Reading**

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1. Anthony Arblaster : *Democracy*, Berkshipp, Open University, Press, 1994.
2. Rajiv Bhargava : *Political Theory An Introduction & Ashok Acharya* (ed), Delhi, Pearson, 2009.
3. John Hoffman and Paul Graham : *Introduction to Political Theory*, Delhi, Pearson Education, 2007.
4. M. J. Vinod and M. Despande, *Contemporary Political Theory*, Delhi, PHI, 2013.

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## **Unit-13 □ Forms of Democracy : Liberal and Socialist**

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### **Structure**

**13.0 Objective**

**13.1 Introduction**

**13.2 Liberalism and Liberal Democracy**

**13.3 Main Principles and Characteristics of Liberal Democracy**

**13.4 Models of Democracy**

**13.5 Socialist Democracy**

**13.6 Conclusion**

**13.7 Probable Questions**

**13.8 Further Reading**

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### **13.0 Objective**

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By reading this unit the students will be acquainted with the following:

- (a) The relation between liberalism and liberal democracy
- (b) Main principles and features of liberal democracy
- (c) Different models of liberal democracy
- (d) Nature and features of socialist democracy

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### **13.1 Introduction**

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Democracy is a broad concept having many forms, manifestations and ramifications. There is no single, uniform form of democracy. Actually, there are many forms of democracy. The forms of democracy is determined on the basis of the yardstick used to classify it. For example, on the basis of the nature of relationship between the immediate sovereign and the ultimate sovereign it may be classified into direct and indirect or representative democracy. In the former, the nature of relationship between the immediate sovereign and the ultimate sovereign coincides while in the latter they differs. In a direct democracy, the people directly participate and decide on legislature. The city-states of ancient greece perhaps best illustrate this type of

democracy. The citizens of the states were the direct participants in the management of the public affairs. Such system still exists in some very small provinces (cantons) of Switzerland. On the other hand, in an indirect or representative democracy, a clear distinction is made between the immediate sovereign and the ultimate sovereign. In this type of democracy, the citizens of the state do not directly participate and decide, but they merely elect their representatives to deliberate and decide on legislature. The citizens are merely electorate. They are the ultimate repository of the sovereign power; but, not they, but the legislature comprising of the representatives is the immediate sovereign. The elected representatives make laws on behalf of the people and in tune with public opinion. Indirect or representative democracy is the rule of day.

A democratic form of government can also be classified as parliamentary or cabinet and presidential form of government. In a presidential form of democracy, like the United States of America, the President is directly elected by the people and he enjoys real powers of decision-making and execution. This form of democracy is based on generally on separation of powers between the legislature and the executive. The President of US is not accountable to the American Congress (the legislature). In a parliamentary form of government, real powers of decision-making lies with the parliament; and the President, the head of the state, is merely nominal or titular head as in India. In a parliamentary or cabinet system of government, the cabinet (the executive) is immediately and legally responsible to the legislature for its policies and acts.

But, from broader socio-economic and ideological point of view, democracy can be classified into two basic forms—liberal democracy and socialist democracy. Liberal democracy refers to a political system in which individual rights, particularly property rights, are given special constitutional protection against infringements and its socio economic system is basically capitalist and non-egalitarian. On the other hand, socialist democracy presupposes socialist economy and equalitarian society and rule of the toiling masses.

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## **13.2 From Liberalism to Liberal Democracy**

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Liberal democracy is a combination of two, originally antithetical, principles—liberalism and democracy. It has a hybrid character. As Andrew Heywood has observed, "...liberal-democratic political system have a hybrid character: they embody two distinct features, one liberal, the other democratic. The liberal element reflects a belief in limited government; the democratic element reflects a commitment to popular rule". In his opinion, the hybrid nature of liberal democracy reflects a basic

ambivalence within liberalism towards democracy. Actually, in their emerging phases these relations were not cordial and accommodative. Rather in their origins, both liberalism and democracy represented two different trends in political philosophy. Liberalism stood for individual, i.e. individual's rights, liberty and property; whereas democracy stood for collectivity, i.e. collective power in the form of majority rule.

Liberalism is a political philosophy and also a programme of social action. It is difficult to define satisfactorily the term 'liberalism'. Rather, in the words of Max Lerner, liberalism is 'perhaps the most disputed terms of our generation. This is partly due to loose and arbitrary way the term liberalism has been used in political discussions and parlances. G. Sartori comments', "Liberalism is a concept so amorphous and changeable as to be left readily at the mercy of arbitrary stipulators". (Democratic Theory, p-366). Question arises as to whether is it a creed or definite doctrine or simply 'a faith', 'an attitude of mind' and a 'psychological attitude'?

In a way, liberalism is associated with individual and individualism. Individual—his rights, freedom and liberty—occupies central place in liberalism and by the same token it emphasizes on freeing individual from state and government's control and repression. In Hacker's opinion, "It is a view of the individual, of the state, and of the relations between them". It defines relations between state and individual from the standpoint of individual. From this standpoint, liberalism acts as an organising principle of society, a policy of defining relations between state and individual and also a programme of social action. In Encyclopaedia Britannica it has been defined "as an idea committed to freedom as a method and policy in government as an organising principle in society, and a way of life for the individual and the community." Early liberals felt the need to free the people from authority of feudal lords and powers of the clergy as well as from the restrictions and repression of autocratic and authoritarian governments. Therefore, the idea of liberty occupies an important place in liberalism. As Derek Heater says: "Freedom is the quintessence of liberalism...."

Still liberalism, which stood for 'free the people', however, did not favour democracy which stood for 'empowering the people'. But the concept of 'people' was used in very restricted sense meaning thereby only the owners of property or the propertied classes. The classical liberal theory was committed to the individual's right for unlimited acquisition of property. Therefore, right to individual property may be regarded as another 'quintessence' of liberalism. As a matter of fact, early liberals had 'fear of the many, the multitude, which is to be a recurring motif in the re-emergence of democracy in the modern era'. Actually they abhorred 'the beast with

many heads'. Therefore, they were concerned about using the concept 'popular sovereignty' in a very particular and restricted sense keeping in mind "the interest of the responsible and respectable, without placing an ideological weapon in the hands of 'the multitude'..."

As a result, instead of welcoming democracy and implementing popular rule and accepting concept of popular sovereignty in its universalist sense, early liberalism rather had an ambivalence towards democracy. On the opposite, it was antidemocratic. As C. B. Macpherson in his *Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval* has observed: 'Until the nineteenth century liberal theory, like the liberal state, was not at all democratic, much of it was specifically antidemocratic'. Andrew Heywood has noted that 'In the nineteenth century, liberals often saw democracy as threatening or dangerous.'

But perception of liberals towards democracy changed with changing perspectives. Classical liberalism fostered capitalism and a free-market economy. It subscribed egoistic individualism and harboured a detest for popular rule, that is, rule of the multitude. But it was also forced to recognise the rise of a large working class. This, in turn, led to reorientation of outlook of the liberals and reorganization of system of governance accordingly. Thus, a liberal state, which did not begin as a democratic one, shook of its 'fear of the many, the multitude' and accepted democratic procedure as a method of governance.

This journey results in the arrival of a new political concept and new a political order— Liberal Democracy. Thus originally two antithetical principles come to be mingled in and gave birth of a powerful, longlasting political philosophy and a particular form of government. Now, 'Liberal ideas and democratic procedures have gradually become interwoven'. Although liberal state did not begin as a democratic one, however, it gradually became a democratic state. Extension of voting rights to the ever-increasing working class and women paved the way for a liberal state to be regarded as democratic state, This new state-form ushering a new method to arrive at collective decisions and prescribing a set of values and behaviour came to be known as liberal democracy or liberal democratic state. Thus a liberal state which initially did not begin as a democratic state, became gradually a democratic state 'with the widening of suffrage bringing in the working class and women into the political fray, and by improved techniques of participation.'

Liberal democracy has to be contrasted from traditional democracy. It has rightly been commented by Professor Sobhanlal Dutta Gupta: "In terms of its arrival

democracy in the classical sense is as old as the ancient Greeks in 5th century B.C.”<sup>6</sup> While democracy is an old concept; liberalism is relatively recent one. Again, at the time of its arrival liberalism was not associated with democracy; rather there was an antithetical relations between them. Misgivings about democracy among the early liberals gradually gave way to positive exposition towards democracy. "By the twentieth century", says Andrew Heywood, 'a large proportion of liberals had come to see democracy as a virtue.'<sup>7</sup> By that time liberal democracy became the dominant the mode of rule in several countries in the world. Heywood has observed; 'By the end of the twentieth century, liberal democracy appeared to have vanquished its major rivals'. By the term 'major rivals' he particularly means other models of democratic rule.

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### **13.3 Liberal Democracy: Main Principles and Characteristics**

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Liberal democracy is based on certain main principles and identifiable on the basis of certain characteristics. B. Goodwin in his book *Using Political Ideas* mentions few ideas as the basis of liberal democracy. The ideas she mentions as the basis of liberal democracy are: (a) supremacy of the people; (b) the consent of the governed as the basis of legitimacy; (c) the rule of law; (d) the existence of a common good of public interest; (e) the value of the individual as a rational moral active citizen; and (f) equal rights for all individuals. Peter H. Merkle, in his *Political Continuity and Change*, has enumerated four principles of liberal democracy. These are: (a) government by discussion; (b) majority rule; (c) recognition of minority rights; and (d) constitutional government.

These basic principles, to some extent, characterise the nature of liberal democracy. But these are not enough. In addition to these, there are certain institutions and procedures which are considered to be essential characteristics of liberal democracy. Some of the characteristic features of liberal democracy are: (a) recognition and existence of individuals rights and freedom of expression; (b) universal adult suffrage; (c) periodic elections based on universal adult franchise; (d) competitive political parties; (e) representative government; (f) openness of public offices to all; (g) a system of political checks and balances; (g) independence of the judiciary; (h) freedom of the press.

Therefore, liberal democracy is not simply a political idea or a political philosophy. It is a way of life. Moreover now-a-days it is seen as a political system. As a political



system, liberal democracy exhibits the above-mentioned characteristics. Professor Alan R. Ball in his *Modern Politics and Government* (p.43) has enumerated 7-fold characteristics of the liberal democratic system. According to Ball these are:

1. There exists more than one political party competing for political powers.
2. Avenue for political power is open, that is, there exists open competition for power which is, however, conducted on the basis of established and accepted forms of procedure.
3. Entry and recruitment to positions of political power are relatively open.
4. Periodic elections are held on the basis of universal adult franchise.
5. There exists various types of voluntary associations (like pressure groups, interest groups) which are free from close governmental control and they are able to operate to influence government decisions.
6. Civil liberties are recognised and protected as well as mass media are free from governmental control.
7. There exists some form of separation of powers among three branches (executive, legislative and judicial) of government and the judiciary remains independent of the other organs (both executive and legislature) of government.

We may say that popular sovereignty, representative government, open competition for political power, existence of more than one political parties and a host of autonomous private associations (i.e. interest and pressure groups), individuals rights and freedoms specifically right to dissent, separation of powers and independence of judiciary are some of the essential characteristics of liberal democratic political system. Many other characteristics may be added to this list. But, according to Andrew Heywood, three central features are:

"Liberal democracy is an indirect and representative form of democracy. Political office is gained through success in regular elections, conducted on the basis of formal political equality—'one person, one vote; one vote, one value'.

- \* "It is based upon competition and electoral choice. This is ensured by political pluralism, a tolerance of a wide range of contending beliefs, conflicting social philosophies and rival political movements and parties."
- \* It is characterized by a clear distinction between the state and civil society. This is maintained both by internal and external checks on government

power and the existence of autonomous groups and interests, and by the market of capitalist organizations of economic life."<sup>9</sup>

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## 13.4 Models of Democracy

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Liberal democracy is composed of two components—liberal and democratic. Democracy has an instrumental value to the liberals. But there is no unanimity among the liberals in respect of value they attach to democracy. Some liberals are concerned about its 'protective' value and role, while some others are concerned about its 'developmental' value and role. As a result different models of liberal democracy have appeared in the political discourse. Prof. David Held in his *Models of Democracy* has identified two variants of liberal democratic model. These are known as 'protective' and 'developmental' models. Outside the ambit of these two variants of liberal democratic model, he also identified another model which is known as 'participatory' model of democracy. Actually, there are two basic models of democracy—the liberal and participatory models. And the liberal model has two variants—protective and developmental.

### Protective Democracy

Early liberals like Jeremy Bentham and James Mill were the champions of protective democracy. They were concerned about protection of citizens from despotic use of political power. For them, democracy was meant to be protective, in the sense that it was to protect the rights of citizens and safeguard them from the tyranny of state power. As David Held has observed that 'Principle(s) of justification' of protective democracy is: "Citizens require protection from the governors, as well as from each other, to ensure that those who govern pursue policies that are commensurate with citizens' interests as a whole".<sup>10</sup>

Rudimentary ideas of protective democracy are traceable in the writings of John Locke and Montesquieu. However, the ideas of political thinkers of the 17th and 18th century were not fully developed. James Madison, Jeremy Bentham and James Mill may be regarded as the main exponents of protective democracy. It is true that liberalism emerged in the context of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. But the protective variant of the liberal democratic model developed in the late 18th and early 19th century in the writings of Bentham, Madison and James Mill. Actually, a classical exposition of protective democracy could be found in their writings.

These early liberals were reluctant democrats, more liberals than democrats and concerned more about protecting individual, that is, their rights and interests from tyranny of state powers. In their opinion, democracy was required to protect citizens from despotic use of political power, and hence, they sought to put limits on the absolute powers of the monarchs and the feudal aristocrats or other groups. Citizens require protection not only from the governors but also from each other.

Protective democracy has some key features. These are:

(a) Sovereignty of the people exercisable through their representatives; (b) regular elections through secret ballot, open political competition between factions, potential leaders or political parties; majority rule and accountability of those who govern; (c) impersonal and legally circumscribed state powers along with division of powers among the executive, the legislature and the judiciary; (d) centrality of constitutionalism guaranteeing freedom from arbitrary treatment, equality before the law and recognition of other political and civil rights like freedom of speech, expression, association, voting and belief; (e) separation of state from civil society. Thus, protective democracy is based on the idea of popular sovereignty, electoral politics and representative democracy, legally limited state powers, separation of powers among different departments of government, recognition of citizens rights and liberties, separation of state and civil society or the public and private life of individuals.

### **Modern version**

Modern version of protective democracy is found in the writings of Robert Nozick and Friedrich Hayek. They are known as the New Right and their views are also known as neo-liberals or neo-conservatism. Both Nozick and Hayek have expressed their apprehension about 'an ever more intrusive welfare state in the west'. In the opinion of Nozick the proper role of the liberal democratic state in the future should only be a 'protective agency' against force, theft, fraud and the violation of contracts. In essence, he argued for 'minimal state'. Hayek saw fundamental dangers in the dynamics of contemporary 'mass democracy'. In his opinion coercive political power (resulting from 'the unrestricted will of the majority') can be contained if, and only if, the 'Rule of Law' is respected. In brief, as David Held has pointed out." At root, the New Right has been concerned to advance the cause of 'liberalism' against 'democracy' by limiting the democratic use of state powers.

### **Developmental Model**

Other model of liberal-democratic theory is known as Developmental Model. David Held constructs his concept of developmental model on the basis of writings of John Stuart Mill. Not protective, but the developmental aspect of democracy was more important to Mill as, he thought, it has positive bearing on the free development of individuality. However in this regard C. B. Macpherson attributes credit also to T. H. Green. In his opinion, both John Stuart Mill and T. H. Green wanted democratic theory to maximize men's developmental power. But it was mainly John Stuart Mill, who being a clear advocate of democracy, understood democracy as a system which allows for the development of an individual's personality. David Held mentions that Macpherson in his *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* points out that like Rousseau and Wollstonecraft before him, Mill conceived of democratic politics as a prime mechanism of moral ... development<sup>11</sup>. David Held himself observes that : "Liberal democratic or representative government was important for him, not just because it established boundaries for the purpose of individual satisfaction, but because it was an important aspect of the free development of individuality".<sup>12</sup>

### **Aims and Features**

The aim of developmental democracy is to create an informed, committed and developing citizenry. Here promotion of individual interests are not of primary importance although its necessity is not completely ignored. Developmental democracy is based on the assumption that participation and involvement in political life is essential for the 'highest and harmonious' expansion of individual capacities. As opposed to protective democracy, which aims to protect the rights and interests of citizens and safeguard them from the tyranny of state power; development democracy is more concerned for the development of an individual's personality. Key features of developmental democracy are: (a) popular sovereignty with a universal franchise; (b) representative government on the basis of elected leadership, regular elections, secret ballot etc; (c) constitutional checks, limitations and division of state power; (d) clear demarcation and separation of functions between legislature and executive and (e) citizen's involvement and participation in political life. All these features are aimed to ensure promotion of individual rights and freedoms, which, in turn, help the pursuit of individually chosen 'life plan' and develop the intellectual talents of people.

Unlike Bentham and James Mill who were reluctant democrats, Mill was a clear advocate of democracy. So for him, liberal democracy or representative government and political involvement and participation of people in political life were essential for the free development of individuality and for their moral development. The 'highest and harmonious' expansion of individual capacities was his central concern. As Wayper has said. "Mill is a democrat above all not because he believes that democracy makes men happier, but because he is convinced that it makes them better".

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### **13.5 Socialist Democracy**

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There is a good deal of confusion about the relationship between socialism and democracy. Their relationship has been debated, defended, but ultimately defies any satisfactory answer. Two questions that relates to this topic is: (a) is socialism compatible with democracy?; and (b) is socialism possible without democracy? These two issues can be addressed and their relationship can be explained both from the theoretical and practical point of view.

Again, there is a great deal of confusion regarding what is socialism as there are varieties of socialism like utopian socialism, guild-socialism, fabianism, democratic socialism etc. As we are not dealing with the subtle differences among these varieties of socialism, we may remain content with some fundamental characteristics that all forms of socialism share. Michael Newman has pointed out three fundamental characteristics of all forms of socialism. These are, according to him:<sup>13</sup>

"In my view, the most fundamental characteristic of socialism is its commitment to the creations of an egalitarian society.

"A second, and closely related, common feature of socialism has been a belief in the possibility of constructing an alternative egalitarian system based on the values and cooperation.

"Finally, most socialists have been convinced that it is possible to make significant changes in the world through conscious human agency."  
(Socialism: A Very Short Introduction).

Socialism is usually thought to be not only incompatible with democracy but also basically an anti democratic ideology. While liberal democracy emphasizes on liberty and individualism, socialism emphasizes on egalitarianism and collective

effort and cooperation. Critics of socialism usually hold that equality and liberty are two contradictory things and socialism, by emphasizing on preeminence of equality, actually ignores the importance of liberty and individual freedom. To them, "liberty matters more than equality". It is held that socialism is basically anti-liberty, anti-freedom, and that is why, anti-democratic. This view has ofcourse been reinforced by Soviet practice during Stalinism and Neo-Stalinism (or Khrushchovism) and Chinese practice during Mao-era and post-Mao-era.

But the advocates of socialism, particularly the marxists, do not admit that socialism is incompatible with democracy. Rather, they believe that socialism immensely expands the horizon of democracy. Under the liberal, in the marxist terminology 'bourgeois', democracy, it remains confined within narrow, limited sphere; whereas under socialism it becomes meaningful and actual to the larger section of people. The advocates of socialism believe that 'democracy means equality' and democracy remains narrow and incomplete without equality. Socialism overcomes formal equality of liberal democracy and it paves the way for advancement from formal equality to actual equality. Thus expanding and actualizing the process of democratization, socialism builds newer and developed form of democracy as distinguished from liberal democracy.

### **Salient features of Socialist Democracy:**

Socialist political system has been noticed in the past in erstwhile Soviet Union and various East European states as well as it is still, at least theoretically, found in People's Republic of China. In spite of variations and subtle differences among these states, certain general features of socialist democracy as found in all of them may be mentioned in brief. These are:

- (a) Socialist democracy is based on basic premises of socialism. Concept of democracy is inseparable from the basic principles of socialism: equality, particularly economic equality, protection and development of toiling people's interests, socialist ownership of the means of production. Establishment of socialism through goal-oriented socio-economic development works as the bases and direction of democracy under socialism.
- (b) Socialist democracy bases itself on concept of popular sovereignty. People is thought to be the sources of state power. Whether it was former Soviet Union or it is present People's Republic of China constitutionally

all power belong to the people. They exercise this power through their representatives bodies like the Soviets of People's Deputies or the National People's Congress.

- (c) The basis of socialist democracy is equality. Socialism emphasizes on both legal and economic equality. Socialist democracy recognises equality before the law, without distinction of origin, social or property status, race or nationality, sex, education, language, attitude to religion etc. It specially emphasises on economic equality without which it is hold that both democracy and socialism remain meaningless and ineffective.
- (d) Socialist democracy recognizes basic rights and freedoms of the individual. It is said that the rights and freedoms of the individual constitute an organic element of socialist democracy. The members of socialist society enjoy various socio-economic and cultural rights, political rights and freedoms, and personal freedoms. Such rights and freedom enable them freely to develop and execute the abilities and talents they are endowed with as well as to participate in various spheres of social and state activities. It is also claimed that equally active measures are taken to protect the individual and his rights and freedoms.
- (e) Another aspect of socialist democracy is socialist law and morality Socialist laws and legislation are intended to enable the individual to enjoy his rights and freedoms to the fullest extent and at the same time impressing on him the need to fulfil his obligation towards society. Law embraces the principles of socialist morality. These two are, though not completely identical, close to one another.
- (f) Socialist democracy is usually associated with single party system and single ideology. Experiences of various socialist systems found in different parts of the world show that socialist political systems do not allow more than one political party to function. Existence and dominance of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) as the only political party in the erstwhile Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China (CPC) in People's Republic of China are cases in point. It is claimed that as both the socialist states and their communist parties represent the aims, aspirations and interests of the toiling masses; therefore, people can exercise their democratic rights through

them and enjoy their freedoms. Working of the organisational principle of democratic centralism both at the state and at party level provides scope for democratic activities, and exercise of democratic rights in consonance with the principles of socialism.

- (g) At the economic level, socialist democracy is associated with socialization of the means of production. It is pertinent to point out here that one of the cardinal points of liberal democracy is to protect private property of individual and it is considered as the very basis of liberal democracy. Private property is thought to be sacrosanct and inseparable from individual and all rights and freedoms are aimed at protecting and promoting it. But socialism takes a different view. It takes away private property in the means of production. In socialist view, this step furthers the bases of equality and thus enable larger number of people to enjoy and practice their legally and constitutionally recognized rights and freedoms. It is claimed that by way of doing away with private property in the means of production, which is seen as means for oppression and exploitation, socialism actually makes democracy meaningful and effective and paves the way for more developed and larger democracy.

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## 13.6 Conclusion

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Though democracy is most popular and familiar system of government yet over time it assumes a complication nature. This makes it a highly contested concept. However, despite the forms it takes, it cannot be denied that a democratic government needs to value every individual and protect their rights without which its sustenance in the long run will be at threat.

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## 13.7 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. What do you mean by liberal democracy? What are its main principles and features?
2. Examine, after David Held, the models of democracy.
3. Write a note on socialist democracy.



**Long Questions :**

1. Discuss the characteristic features of liberal democracy.
2. What, according to David Held, is the meaning of the 'protective model' of democracy? What are its key features?
3. What, according to David Held, is the meaning of the 'developmental model' of democracy? What are its key features?

**Short Questions :**

1. Mention the main principles of liberal democracy.
2. Discuss the aims and features of the developmental model of democracy.
3. Discuss three fundamental characteristics of the forms of socialism.

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**13.8 Further Reading**

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1. Andrew Heywood: *Political Ideologies : An Introduction*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003.
2. David Held : *Models of Democracy*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1987.
3. Michael Newman: *Socialism : A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, OUP, 2005.
4. H. Aptheker (ed): *Marxism and Democracy*, New York, Humanities Press, 1965.

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## **Unit-14 □ Procedural Democracy : Critique of Procedural Democracy**

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### **Structure**

#### **14.0 Objective**

#### **14.1 Introduction**

#### **14.2 Procedural Democracy**

#### **14.3 Main Principles of Procedural Democracy**

#### **14.4 Views of Joseph Schumpeter**

#### **14.5 Views of Robert Dahl**

#### **14.6 Contrast between Procedural and Substantive Democracy**

#### **14.7 Conclusion**

#### **14.8 Probable Questions**

#### **14.9 Further Reading**

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### **14.0 Objective**

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By reading this unit the students will be acquainted with the following:

- (a) In the Introduction the students will be familiar with an overview of Procedural democracy.
- (b) Main principles of procedural democracy
- (c) The bases of or reasons for advocacy for procedural democracy
- (d) How procedural democracy differs from substantive democracy.

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### **14.1 Introduction**

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There are different theories, forms and models of democracy. Considerations of different perspectives, perceptions, and aspects dominate the process of conceptualisation and development of different theories, forms and models of democracy. Therefore, there is no uniformity among theorists and model-builders in these respects. However, it may be said that two different and contrasting ideas or concepts of democracy are: procedural and substantive concepts of democracy. In his

Models of Democracy, David Held, however, attempts to distinguish broadly between the liberal and participatory models of democracy. According to him two variants of liberal democracy are: protective and developmental. Therefore, questions arise whether procedural and substantive notions of democracy are to be regarded simply as ideas, or concepts or models.

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## 14.2 Procedural Democracy

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The concept or to be more specific, the model of procedural democracy concentrates and emphasizes on the procedural or formal aspects of democracy. From this point of view, democracy is viewed 'purely as a set of institutions—encompassing free and fair elections, legislative assemblies, and constitutional governments arising out of these'. Here procedures for formation of a government, its accountability and also its responsibility to protect citizen's rights and liberties are important criteria to be characterised as procedural democracy. Procedural democracy, according to Professor Subrata Mukherjee and Sushila Ramaswamy, "involves the mechanism of free, fair and competitive elections by which governments are held accountable and a constitutional framework that guarantees and protects rights and liberties".

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## 14.3 Main Principles of Procedural Democracy

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Procedural democracy relies on five main principles: electoral process, universal participation, political equality, majority rule and responsiveness of representatives to the electorate.

**Electoral process :** Electoral process is an important indicator of procedural democracy. In procedural democracy elaborate structural and institutional arrangements are made for election of representatives by the electorate i.e. by the voters. Periodical elections are held to elect the representatives of the people. Therefore, electoral process is at the core of the political system as envisaged by the proponents of procedural democracy. This type of democracy is characterised by voters choosing to elect representatives in elections.

**Universal Participation :** Universal participation is another main principle of procedural democracy. This type of democracy is characterised by universal participations of the citizens particularly in the electoral process. No doubt, universal adult franchise is a prerequisite of universal participation. As procedural democracy

is basically election-centric, therefore, its efficacy is mainly judged by electoral participation, that is, by voter's turn out in the elections. From this point of view, election data about participation are considered to be important yardstick to judge the success of democratic system. In this respect, India's standing is very high with average voters turnouts are between 50 and 60 per cent.

**Political Equality :** In consonance with democratic concept, procedural democracy emphasizes on political equality. Like universal adult suffrage, political equality is, again, a prerequisite for universal participation. Political equality means that all persons irrespective of sex, caste or creed, race or religion, rich or poor, have the right to participate in the affairs of the state. It ensures the right to elect and to be elected. Procedural democracy is basically political democracy which can be ensured through political equality. Political equality which, in turn, is based on legal equality, that is, equality before laws and equal protection by the laws, is an important principle as well as characteristic of procedural democracy.

**Majority Rule :** Democracy is, in essence, a majority rule or government of the majority. But what does majority imply in this regard? Majority may mean majority of votes secured by a political party in the legislative or decision-making bodies or majority of seats won in the election of legislative and decision-making bodies. In general, majority rule means majority of seats won by a political party in the legislature and other decision-making bodies which give them right to rule and decide on behalf of the electorate. It also means that in those bodies issues are to be resolved by voting. Procedural democracy is characterised by voters choosing to elect their representatives in elections and through those elections, government and decision-making authorities are formed at the concerned levels with the support of larger numbers of elected representatives. It is supposed that there shall be more than one political parties, competitors or candidates competing freely for electoral mandate and the right to rule vests on that political party or candidates which secures larger number of seats or votes in the elections. Whether it is parliamentary form of government or presidential form of government, it is the majority opinion expressed through electoral mandate that determines the right to rule and decide.

**Responsiveness :** In a democracy, responsiveness of representatives to the electorate is so important as the election of representative by the electorate. Democracy means not only representative government but it also means responsible government. Responsible government can only be ensured when government is responsive to the

demands and grievances of the elected representatives as well when elected representatives are also responsive to the demands and grievances of the electorate. When this responsiveness is ensured democracy becomes meaningful and fruitful and it turns out to be popular government.

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## **14.4 Advocacy for Procedural Democracy: Schumpeter and Dahl**

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The concept of procedural democracy finds justification in the writings of eminent theorists like Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Dahl. While Schumpeter is known as eminent theorist of democratic elitism, Robert Dahl is regarded as the prominent theorist of democratic revisionism.

### **Joseph Schumpeter :**

Joseph Schumpeter's idea set out in his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. This book is the most influential text in the development of 'the modern elitist theory of democracy' which is alternatively known as theory of democratic elitism. To him, 'democracy is only a formal political organisational principle'. He does not consider democracy as 'an end in itself'; but it is 'a political method'. He defines it as 'a political methods... for arriving at political – legislative and administrative– decisions'. It is a system of institutions' or an 'institutional system'. As he himself says: 'Democracy is not based on certain social values; it is a system of institutions designed for putting political decisions into effect, in which these decisions are made in a competitive struggle for the people's vote'. For him, people are simply 'producers of governments' and democracy is a mechanism to select 'the men who are able to do the deciding'. Thus, the proper role of the people was to choose their ruler through competitive elections, and then leave them to get on with the business of governing.

In this way, Schumpeter, firstly, emphasizes the role of people and democratic values. People are simply producers of governments or selectors who select who would govern them. As he himself says: "... the role of the people is to produce government..." Secondly, he reduces democracy simply as ' a formal political organisation principle' and as a political and democratic method or an institutional arrangement. As a method, according to him, it is 'that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide the means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote. He calls it 'the democratic method'. Thirdly, the significance of Schumpeter's concept of democracy which is

based on the idea that people are not rulers, but they are merely selectors or choosers or 'producers of governments' is that it makes elitism compatible with democracy. Free elections induce an element of competition among elite groups and it legitimises competition among governing elites. Fourthly, democracy is hereby viewed as a procedure. It is an exercise to institutionalise and rationalise election of rulers through general elections without having any relations to certain social values. Fifthly, he thus rejects both the doctrine of classical democracy as well as the central proposition of the classical theory that "the people" hold a definite and rational opinion. At the same time he emphasises for a proper recognition of the vital fact of leadership.

In brief, he views democracy as a procedure and defines democracy as a method to arrive at political, legislative and administrative decisions. In this process, the role of the people are merely those of producers of governments. Other side of the same coin is the vital role of leadership which he emphasises by introducing 'the concept of competition for leadership'. He merges these two sides in his concept of democracy as a procedure. Actually in this way he tries to make democracy and elitism compatible.

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## 14.5 Robert Dahl

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While Joseph Schumpeter describes democracy from the elitist point of view and makes democracy compatible with elitism, Robert Dahl examines it from pluralist point of view. But both these thinkers viewing democracy from different angles; however, in essence, both of them argue for procedural democracy, or what one may say, democracy as a process.

Robert Dahl, an eminent American political scientist and a leading theorist of political pluralism, views democracy basically as a process. He says: 'democratic theory is concerned with processes by which ordinary citizens exert a relatively high degree of control over leaders'. He was initially an exponent of polyarchy or polyarchal democracy and later he advanced the theory of procedural democracy. His most recent essays (After the Revolution) discussed the idea of "procedural democracy" which is properly understood as the latest version of his evolving theory of polyarchal democracy. Dahl coined the term 'polyarchy'. It consists of two words 'poly' and 'arkhe'. Poly means 'many' and 'arkhe' means 'rule'. Dahl uses the term 'Polyarchy' to denote the acquisition of democratic institutions within a political

system that leads to the participation of a plurality of actors. It refers to the form of government found in contemporary democracies, but it is not the same as democracy. According to Hans Keman, "Polyarchy, which means 'rule by many', describes the process of democratization, in contrast to democracy itself."<sup>3</sup> (see [https://www.britannica.com/topic,Polyarchy](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Polyarchy)). Keman also says that "Polyarchy, as presented by Dahl, should be understood as a process by which a set of institutions that comes close to what one could call the ideal type of democracy is developed. Therefore, public power is essential, and authority is effectively controlled by societal organizations and civil associations (e.g. interest group and political parties). Hence, in Dahl's view, the extent to which those societal actors can and do operate autonomously, as well as independently from the state, will enhance the democratic quality of a polity".<sup>4</sup>

His concept of democracy (i.e. elections combined with continuous political competition between individuals or parties or both) promote popular sovereignty and political equality by increasing the 'size, number, and variety of minorities whose preferences must be taken into account by leaders'; but it does not lead to the majority rule. As a matter of fact, "polyarchy is neither pure majority rule nor unified minority rule. It is an open competitive, and pluralist system of 'minority rule'.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, popular participation plays only a peripheral role in Dahl's early democratic theory. Emphasis is led on ceaseless bargaining and negotiation between organized minorities "operating within the context of an apathetic majority" rather than extensive mass participation. This ensures leaders responsiveness to the preferences of non-leaders in the decision-making system, He insists that rule by the people' (popular sovereignty and political equality) is essential for democracy. But political equality and popular sovereignty are not absolute goals, rather these have instrumental value. These two are seen as instrumental means for ensuring the responsiveness of the government to the policy preferences of individuals.

In his *After the Revolution?* and in sharp contrast to his earlier works, Dahl's preference for smaller, more participatory democratic form becomes evident. In it we find, a much stronger emphasis upon the value of direct citizen participation in political and economic life. But here again, he thinks democratic participation is like popular sovereignty and political equality, purely an instrument for enforcing accountability.

All these shows evolution of Dahl's theory of democracy. It has evolved from his initial theory of polyarchal democracy, to his theory of 'procedural democracy'.

A policy to be regarded procedural democracy must satisfies three criteria. These are (a) 'political equality' (including its socio economic prerequisites), (b) 'effective participation' and (c) 'enlightened understanding'. Effective participation roughly indicates popular sovereignty. Thus the first two are familiar extensions of his earlier theory of polyarchy. Therefore, the third one is the additional criterion that Dahl added to his theory of procedural democracy and it requires that citizens have adequate and equal opportunities for formulating their preferences.

Dahl's concept of procedural democracy functions according to the ideal standards, that is, according to five criteria that he has introduced in this respect. The criteria are effective participation, voting equality at the decisive stage, enlightened understanding, control over the agenda, and inclusion. However his vision of procedural democracy does not ignore a variety of such as equality, freedom, human development, and human worth. Therefore the procedural democracy is not oblivious of substantive issues. However, Dahl's theory of procedural democracy relies basically on four major principles: universal participation, political equality, majority rule and responsiveness of representatives to the electorate.

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## **14.6 Contrast between Procedural and Substantive Democracy**

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Procedural democracy has to be differentiated from substantive democracy. Substantive democracy is another form of democracy which emphasizes not on procedures but on the substantive issues of democracy. According to the theory of substantive democracy 'a democracy is a society peopled by truly equal citizens, who are politically engaged, tolerant of different opinions and ways of life, and have an equal voice of choosing their rulers and holding them accountable. This type of democracy functions in the interest of the governed. Substantive democracy, it is claimed, transform formal democracy to a real democracy. It is also referred to as functional democracy.

Procedural democracy concentrates on the procedures and institutions of representation rather than on the actual role of the general population. Institution of representation serves as an instrument of accountability. But the drawback of the system is that it also serves, as David Bentham has pointed out, 'as a means of keeping the people at arm's length from the political process, and establishing a division of labour between an elite of professional politicians engaged in politics, as



a specialised activity on the one side, and a depoliticised, private citizenry on the other'. Secondly, proceduralist view of democracy slips into 'the fallacy of electoralism' as studies of democracy from this standpoint is restricted to election data, Thirdly, it is not concerned with the meaningful exercise of equal rights. Moreover, procedural democracy is compatible with the results which are always skewed in favour of particular interest and groups.

It is in this context, the substantive view of democracy becomes relevant. This view of democracy does not restrict itself only to the procedural and institutional aspects of democracy as well as to formal legal and constitutional guarantees of equal democratic rights. As N. G. Joyal has pointed out that the proponents of a substantive definition of democracy argue that 'the democratic project is incomplete until the meaningful exercise of the equal rights of citizenship have been guaranteed to all'. Naturally, substantive democracy strives to overcome the formal limitations of procedural democracy. On other hand, it emphasizes that the general population must play a real role in carrying out its political affair. Merely securing legal and political equality is not enough. Rather what is absolutely necessary is having a truly equal opportunity to influence governmental decisions. Thus, the state is not merely set up as democracy but it must function as one as well. As Joyal has rightly remarked: "Democracy, therefore, should not be seen as confined to the sphere of state and government, but also as the principle governing collective life in society."

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## 14.7 Conclusion

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As a matter fact, neither the procedural aspect of democracy be overlooked nor the substantive goods be de-emphasized. On the one hand a just process may lead to unjust results, and at the same time, as Robert Dahl maintains when substance takes over process, we are often left with dictatorship. Therefore, what is needed is not a debate between procedure versus substance or priority of one over the other, but a combination of the two to achieve an ideal democratic system.

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## 14.8 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. What do you mean by procedural democracy? What are its main principles?

2. How does the concept of procedural democracy find justification in the writings of Joseph Schumpeter?
3. How does Robert Dahl view democracy as a process? Do you agree with him?

**Long Questions :**

1. How is concept of polyarchy related to the concept of procedural democracy.
2. Write a note on the elitist theory of democracy.
3. Describe the evolution of Robert Dahl's views on democracy.

**Short Questions :**

1. Mention the main principles of procedural democracy.
2. What is meant by 'polyarchy'?
3. What is meant by substantive democracy?

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**14.9 Further Reading**

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1. N.G. Joyal (ed) : Democracy in India : Themes in Politics, Delhi, Oxford University, Press, 2009.
2. Robert Dahl : A Preface to Democratic Theory, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986.
3. J.A. Schumpeter : Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, London, George Allen and Urwin, 1976.

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## **Unit-15 □ Deliberative Democracy : Concept, Characteristics and Forms**

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### **Structure**

- 15.0 Objective**
- 15.1 Introduction**
- 15.2 Origin and development of the concept**
- 15.3 Liberal democracy and deliberative democracy**
- 15.4 Characteristics**
- 15.5 Different types of deliberative democracy**
- 15.6 Conclusion**
- 15.7 Probable Questions**
- 15.8 Further Reading**

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### **15.0 Objective**

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By reading this unit the students will be acquainted with the following:

- (a) In the Introduction the students will be familiar with the concept of deliberative democracy.
- (b) Origin and development of the concept
- (c) The relation between liberal democracy and deliberative democracy
- (d) Characteristics and forms of deliberative democracy.

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### **15.1 Introduction**

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Another addition to the treasury of democratic theories and forms is deliberative democracy. In the last quarter of the 20th century, deliberative democracy came to be presented as complementary to traditional representative democracy. Since the 1980's, particularly in 1990's deliberative democracy began to attract substantial attention from political scientists. Deliberative democracy came to be considered as an important

component of modern liberal theorising. New lights were thrown on decision-making, discourse and debate, discourse of citizenship, legitimacy etc. from the point of view of newly-developed theory of deliberative democracy. It thus presents itself as a new trend in democratic thinking and, of course, within liberal framework.

The concept of deliberative democracy has emerged and developed in the last three decades and considered as an exciting development in political theory. But, as a matter of fact, it has a long history. It was not unknown in primitive society. In primitive societies, all adult members of the community had the right to participate in the collective decision-making process of the community and collective assemblies were empowered to render judgements. However ancient Athenian democracy which arose in Greece during the sixth century BC. is frequently cited in political literature as the earliest manifestation of classical democracy. Athenian democracy was both deliberative and largely direct because of its participatory character.

Deliberative democracy in its ancient form faced its extinction when in 322 BC Athenian democracy came to an end. Revival of democracy in modern time can, however, hardly be regarded as revival of deliberative democracy. It is true that in parliamentary democracy, parliament has been regarded by thinkers like Edmund Burke as a deliberative assembly and it is also true that deliberation is considered to be an essential part of government. However, the notion of democracy that evolve. from the mid 17th century onwards may be different varieties of liberal democracy but can hardly be regarded as deliberative democracy in its newly ascribed sense. Deliberative democracy also falls within the framework of liberal democracy and an important component of modern liberal theorising; still it stand apart from traditional liberal democratic theories with regard to its approach towards procedures of decision-making and legitimacy under democratic system. It emphasizes on the practical reasoning of citizens rather than on that of people's representatives.

### **Definition**

"Broadly defined, deliberative democracy refers to the idea that legitimate law making issues from the public deliberation of citizens". It holds that deliberation is central to decision-making and political decisions should be the product of fair and reasonable discussion and debate among citizens. In the opinion of Andrew Heywood it is 'a form of democracy that emphasizes the role of discourse and debate in helping to define the public interest'. It is believed that people's preferences are formed during political process and not prior to it. Their preferences should be shaped by deliberation in advance of decision-making.

The theory of deliberative democracy has a normative aspect too in the sense that it is concerned not only with how decisions are made but also with how decisions should be made. It assumes that political decisions should be the product of fair and reasonable discussion and debate among citizens. Actually its intention is to influence the actual political process rather than to state the actual political process. As Professor S Ramaswamy has observed that "Deliberative democracy is a normative theory with an intention to influence the actual political process by improving the popular input into policy by making it as broad based as possible". As a normative theory its objective is to broaden the base of democracy through discussion and debate among citizens. This, by effect, legitimizes the political process, because, according to this theory, deliberation among citizens paves the basis of legitimacy.

Christy Friend, in her review of Iris Marion Young's *Inclusion and Democracy*, observes that Young—along with Benjamin Barber, Jürgen Habermas, Nancy Fraser and others—is one of a group of theorists who subscribe to "deliberative" view of democracy,.... holds that democracy is most fundamentally a set of deliberative practices by which people negotiate in order to solve public problems. In this view, democracy is all about persuasion'. The idea of deliberation lies at the core of deliberative democracy. It is its central idea. As has been pointed out by Christian F. Roseboll 'The Central idea of deliberative democracy is that the basis of democratic legitimacy is the public deliberation of citizens'. It is said that free deliberation among equals is the basis of legitimacy. Thus, democratic legitimacy is produced out of public deliberation and serves as the basis of deliberative democracy.

Deliberative democracy attaches very much importance to the idea of deliberation. It acts as the basis of democratic legitimacy. Deliberation is a process and as a process it is concerned with shaping citizens preferences. Citizens preferences are shaped by deliberation and that too in advance of decision making. People's preferences are formed during the political process, i.e. in a public process of deliberation among free and equal citizens. Therefore, deliberation is concerned with the process of reason giving which should precede political decision-making. But deliberation is concerned not only with the process of reason giving, it is also concerned with its outcome. As Christian F. Roseboll notes 'Deliberation is concerned both with the process of reason giving and with its outcomes'. It produces legitimacy and also tends to promote justice.

John Rawls makes a distinction between requirements of deliberation in civil society and official deliberation and, in his view, ideal of public reason only applies to the latter. But Joshua Cohen argues for the ideal deliberative procedure. She points out three features of the ideal deliberative procedure. According to Joshua Cohen these are: First, it helps to account for some familiar judgements about collective decision-making, in particular about the ways that collective decision-making ought to be different from bargaining, contracting and other market-type interactions, both in its explicit attention to considerations of the common advantage and in the ways that alteration helps to form the aims of the participants.

"Second; it accounts for the common view that the notion of democratic association is tied to notions of autonomy and the common good.

"Third, the ideal deliberative procedure provides a distinctive structure for addressing institutional questions".

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## 15.2 Origin and Development

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The concept of deliberative democracy is rather new in the vocabulary of political theory. Joseph M. Bassette is credited with for coinage of the term 'deliberative democracy. Bassette in his *The Mid Voice of Reason: Deliberative Democracy and Americal National Goverment* (1994) seems to have first used the term 'deliberative democracy, to argue against elitist (or "aristocratic") interpretation of the US Coustitution. Bassette called for a participatory view of democratic politics.

It is generally recognised that this new concept of democracy calling for a participatory view of democratic politics gradually developed through the 1970 and began to take definite shape only in the 1980. But its origin can be traced in early sixties of the twentieth century with the publication of Jurgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. The basic theoretical ideas behind this conception of democracy was worked out by Jurgen Habermas. Later, many other critical theorists joined chorus of voices for a participatory view of democratic politics and developed the key theoretical issues of the concept of deliberative democracy. Christy Friend, in her review of Iris Marion Young's *Inclusion and Democracy*, says that 'Young—along with Benjamin Barber Jurgen Habermas, Nancy Fraser, and others—is one of a group of theorists who subscribe to 'deliberative' view of democracy". Among the others mention may be made of John Rawls, Jon Elster, Joshua Cohen, John Orygek who have developed the concept of deliberative democracy and its different features and aspects.

Jurgen Habermas is one of the pioneer theorists of deliberative democracy. Unfortunately his contribution to this theory has not received proper acknowledgement. But he laid the basic theoretical ideas behind this conception of democracy. He presented idealised model of rational, consensus-oriented discourse by elaborating an idealized deliberative procedure. In his 'Popular Sovereignty as Procedure' Jurgen Habermas reviews the relevance of the radical democratic ideas associated with the French Revolution. In this essay, by way of combining the best features of the civil republicanism and liberalism i.e., the two dominant conceptions of democracy, he attempts to present his own model of democracy which is an idealized model of rational, consensus-oriented discourse. He tries to link political power with the rule of law as well as the participatory characteristics of democracy with due emphasis on institutions and legality. As he himself says "the normative expectation of outcomes is grounded ultimately in the interplay between institutionally structured political will-formation and spontaneous, unsubverted circuits of communication in a public sphere that is not programmed to reach decisions and thus not organized." He reminds us that " In this context, the public sphere functions as a normative concept". The arguments and reasons that have held up in the public sphere constrains government officials in constitutional regimes. Pointing out Habermas's position in this regard, Bohman and Rehg say that: 'Insofar as a broadly dispersed, "subjectless communication" among citizens is allowed to develop an autonomous public spheres and enter into receptive representative bodies with formal decision making power, the notion of popular sovereignty—a democratically self-organising society- is not beyond the pale of feasibility"<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, although he does not completely reject the traditional liberal democratic model and its constitutional regimes and decision making bodies, he adds a new element to it by elaborating an idealized deliberative procedure as its point of departure.

In this way, the basic theoretical ideas behind this conception of deliberative democracy was worked out by Jurgen Habermas and also by other critical theorists. Although Habermas worked out the basic theoretical ideas behind this conception of democracy, however, it did not immediately take any definite shape and many of the writers on deliberative democracy even in the late eighties did not appreciate many of his ideas. Till up to 1970, two main sources for liberal democratic theory were (a) sociological realism (e.g. Schumpeter's elitist theory and Dahl's pluralist models) and (b) the other economic (e.g. the competitive political process on rational choice assumptions) in working out the philosophical details of a conception of political justification based on deliberation and public reason. John Elster developed his

conceptions of politics as 'public in nature' and that political deliberation requires citizens to go beyond private self-interest of the 'market'. For him, politics involves a public activity that cannot be reduced to the private choices of consumers in the 'market' and that political engagement requires citizens to adopt civic standpoint, an orientation toward the common good, when they consider political issues in the 'forum'. Gutmann and Thompson, in their *Democracy and Disagreement* attempt to show how deliberation can deal with fundamental moral disagreements. The main concern of Iris Marion Young is how to make democracy more inclusive for disadvantaged groups.

The proponents of deliberative democracy have actually developed different aspects of it. Their differences relate to their different approaches and focuses rather than on the key theoretical issues of deliberative democracy. They are in general agreement on at least this: 'The political process involves more than self-interested competition governed by bargaining and aggregative mechanisms'. There are agreements in their views in respect of their emphasis on the will of the people and their active participation, open and uncoerced discussion, democratic self-restraint and human rationality.

In deliberative democracy, the citizens see each other as free persons worth arguing with, as persons who can freely make up their minds in the light of good reasons. It emphasizes on the democratic process based on citizens' participation, debate and discussion, rationality and consensus. But it does not subscribe the view of the aggregative model that democracy is simply 'a process aggregating the preferences of citizens in choosing public officials and policies'. Rather in the deliberative model, democracy is a form of practical reason and democratic process is primarily a discussion of problems, conflicts, claims of needs or interests. It is a form of public reasoning, a public process of deliberation among free and equal citizens through which preferences of citizens are transformed and become the basis of democratic legitimacy.

However, the competitive-pluralist theories and models of liberal democracy faced theoretical challenges and the prevailing trend began to reverse itself in the late 1990s. Actually, certain practical and theoretical issues and reasons were active behind this reversal and at the same time growth of interest about deliberative democracy. These were, according to Bohman and Rehg;

- 1) Broad dissatisfaction with debacle and anonymity of liberal government. The Vietnam war, the 1986 student revolt, and the impact of the civil rights



movements signalled a shift in the academic perception giving rise to neo-conservatism. There was also an increasing perception that decision making in government was bureaucratic and beyond the control of citizens.

- 2) Revival of interest in participatory democracy and politics played an important role in this respect. As Bohman and Rehg say "leftist political activism, with its emphasis on participatory democracy, sparked renewed interest in the possibilities for consensual forms of self-government"

Two separate but complimentary trends were at work for the rise of interest in deliberative democracy. One was the theoretical critique of liberal democracy and the other one was the revival of participatory politics. Both of these two trends gradually developed through the 1970's

These on-going developments had been, to a great extent, crystallised in the 1980s and concept of deliberative democracy began to take definite shape. But it was particularly in the 1990s that the concept of deliberative democracy began to attract substantial attention from political scientists. It came to be considered as an important component of modern liberal theorising and it presented itself as a new trend in democratic thinking. Important contributions were made in this regard by John Rawls, Joshua Cohen, Jon Elster, Gutmann and Thompson, Iris Marion Young and others.

The proponents of deliberative democracy differed among themselves as well as agreed on many points. For example, Habermas idealized model of rational, consensus-oriented discourse and he elaborated an idealized deliberative procedure. John Rawls and Joshu Cohen were more interested in its different aspects.

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### **15.3 Liberal democracy and deliberative democracy**

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Deliberative democracy is often considered as an important component of modern liberal theorising. It is claimed that "It is a theory that concentrates on refining the familiar framework of liberal democracy". Like liberal democracy, deliberative democracy emphasizes on the will of the people and traslation of the concept of 'popular sovereignty' through active participation of the people in the democratic process of deliberation and debates. Jurgen Habermas, one of the pioneer exponents of deliberative democracy, wants to develop the participatory features of democracy; as in liberalism, he wants to emphasize the role of institutions and law.

However, the concept deliberative democracy differs from some prevailing mode of thinking developed within the broader framework of liberal democracy. Firstly, it differs from the sociological theory of democracy. Two variant of the sociological theory of democracy are (a) the elitist theory of democracy propounded by Joseph Schumpeter and his disciples, and (b) the pluralist model of democracy proposed by Robert Dahl and others. In the first variant, it is assumed, on the basis of empirical findings, that modern democracies are politically uninformed, apathetic, manipulable and popular participation could be downright dangerous. It views citizens primarily as passive consumers and political process as a struggle for power among competing interests. Robert Dahl and others, on the other hand, presented a decentralized, ‘polyarchal’ version of pluralism and gave up much of Schumpeter’s elitism. Still, however, like Schumpeterian view, it retained the emphasis on competition, interest, and voting.

Secondly, another source for liberal democratic theory upto 1970 was the economic theory of democracy. This theory as propounded by Anthony Downs attempted to apply economic categories to politics and it results in developing the model in which competitive political process is seen to be based on rational-choice assumptions as it suggests that parties functions as entrepreneurs who compete to sell their policies in a market of political consumers.

All these developments ranging from sociological realism and pluralism to the model of competitive political process on rational choice assumptions took place within the broader frame-work of liberal thinking. As has been pointed out by James Bohman and William Rehg: “These two developments, one sociological and the other economic, were the two main sources for liberal democratic theory upto 1970.”<sup>4</sup> The theorists of one of the two major variants of democratic theory emphasize the plurality of citizens interests and the potential for civil strife as citizens are viewed primarily as passive consumers who exert democratic control primarily through voting and the political process is viewed as a struggle for power among competing interests. Whereas the theorists of other variant takes a more rationalistic view of the citizens but preclude active public deliberation by citizens about a common good.

As against this, deliberative democracy views political process as a search for the common good. It questions the key assumptions underlying the economic and pluralist models. The thrust of the deliberative democracy is on will of the people, human rationality, debate and deliberation, democratic self-restraint, and hope of a

public opinion about a common good. “For a democracy based on public deliberation presupposes that citizens or their representatives can take counsel together about what law and policies they ought to pursue as a commonwealth.” Again to quote from Bohman and Rehg: “Deliberative theorists are in general agreement on at least this: the political process involved more than self interested competition governed by bargaining and aggressive mechanisms.” Therefore, it accepts neither the views of self or group interests and resultant struggle for power among competing interests nor a purely economic standpoint and rationalistic view of citizens precluding active public deliberation by citizens as crucial conditions for democracy. Politics involves public activities and hence active participation and deliberation cannot be precluded from the political process and again it cannot be reduced to the private choices of consumers in the market.

It may be inferred that deliberative democracy advances the theoretical critique of liberal democracy and revival of participatory democracy. Jurgen Habermas’s idealized model of rational, consensus-oriented discourse is a case in point. He seeks to combine the best features of the two dominant conceptions of democracy: civic republicanism and liberalism. As Bohman and Rehg have observed: “As in civic republicanism, Habermas wants to develop the participatory features of democracy as in liberalism, he wants to emphasize the role of institutions and of law.” At the same time, they are quick to point out: “Models such as Habermas’s differ from updated republicanism and right-based liberalism by elaborating on idealized deliberative procedure as its point of departure.” Thus deliberative democracy is both a criticism and rejection as well as accomodation of liberal democracy. It develops participatory features of democracy and idealizes deliberative procedures and, at the same time it emphasizes the role of institutions and law. Therefore, it is a queer mixture of both the theoretical critique of liberal democracy and the acceptance of some of the features of liberal democracy.

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## 15.4 Characteristic Features

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1. The concept of deliberative democracy is both an old as well as a new concept of democracy. It was old in the sense that deliberative democracy was prevalent in ancient Greece. Ancient Athenian democracy was the ancient form of deliberative democracy. Again it is new in the sense that after its extinction in Athens in 320 BC it has again reemerged and evolved in the last three decades.

2. In deliberative democracy, deliberation is considered to be essential part of government. It emphasizes on the practical reasoning of citizens rather than on that of people's representation.
3. Deliberation shapes citizens' preferences. Deliberation is a process and as a process it is concerned with shaping citizens' preferences. Citizens preferences are shaped by public deliberation and that too in advance of decision-making.
4. Deliberative democracy refers to the idea that legitimate law making issues from the public deliberation of citizens. It attaches too much importance to the idea of deliberation. It lies at the core of democracy.
5. Deliberative democracy assumes that public deliberation acts as the basis of democratic legitimacy. The public deliberation is the basis of democratic legitimacy. Free deliberation among equals is the basis of legitimacy.
6. The theory of deliberative democracy has a normative aspect in the sense that it is concerned not only with how decisions are made but also with how decisions should be made.
7. Deliberative democracy implies a deep and broader inclusion and political equality, whose implementation will eventually promote justice.

In her essay 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy' Joshua Cohen mentions five main features of the formal conception of a deliberative democracy. According to her, these are:

- (a) A deliberative democracy is an ongoing and independent association, whose members expect it to continue into the indefinite future.
- (b) The appropriate terms of the association provide a framework for or are the results of their deliberation. For the members of the association, free deliberation among equals is the basis of legitimacy.
- (c) According to Cohen, a deliberative democracy is a pluralistic association. The members have diverse preferences, convictions, and ideas concerning the conduct of their own lives. They also have divergent aims.
- (d) The terms of their association are not merely be the results of their deliberation, but also be manifest to the members of the association as such.
- (e) The members recognize one another as having deliberative capacities like exchange of reasons and acting on public reasoning.

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## 15.5 Forms of deliberation

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Ancient form of deliberative democracy was found in Athens. The striking features of the Athenian democracy was its participatory and deliberative character. It developed institutions of deliberation like Ecclesia. It was the basic governing body where every citizen was entitled to attend and speak at its meetings. As a matter of fact, as democracy evolved in Athens and its citizens enjoyed a free atmosphere of public discussion and lively debate on various domestic and foreign policy questions as well as on institutions and personalities.

In modern times, there are different types of deliberative forms. Modern deliberative forums include both governmental as well as nongovernmental institutions. These include legislature, courts, the administration, and civil society associations. Different deliberative forums have different purposes and follow different procedures. For example, there may be deliberation aimed directly at decisions and also deliberation which has no such direct aim. In Jane Mansbridge's opinion, the distinction between the two is of everyday talk and formal talk. Similarly, in Habermas, we find a distinction between the informal public sphere of civil society and decisional publics. The importance of differentiating between these two types of publics in civil society is that they serve different purposes and that in order to do so they must involve different types of deliberation.

There is no denying that civil society is an important forum of deliberation and as Habermas points out its associations "specialize... in discovering issues relevant for all society". But we cannot disregard the importance of governmental institutions. Parliamentary and governmental decisions are also important as they reflect the deliberation of civil society. Members of different branches of government (such as legislators, administrators and judges) are also considered to be important forums of deliberation.

In addition to that, election campaigners and voters also provide different forums of deliberation. There are also alternative forms of communication which also play an important role. Iris Marion Young thinks that deliberative democracy to be inclusive should allow for the use of greetings, rhetoric and narrative as legitimate forms of communication.

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## 15.6 Conclusion

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Thus, deliberative democracy aims to reach political decisions through fair and reasonable discussion and debate among citizens. So deliberation turns out to be a necessary pre condition for the legitimacy of democratic political decisions. Such a democracy not only prioritise deliberation in decision making but also encourages competing viewpoints and arguments. In doing so, it actually shifts the emphasis from the outcome of the decision to the quality of the process.

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## 15.7 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Analyse the concept of deliberative democracy.
2. Trace the origin and development of the concept of deliberative democracy.
3. Discuss the relation between liberal democracy and deliberative democracy.

### Long Questions :

1. Discuss Jurgen Habermas' contribution to the origin and growth of the concept of deliberative democracy.
2. In what sense deliberative democracy can be considered as a critique of liberal democracy?
3. What are the different forms and forums of deliberative democracy?

### Short Questions :

1. How do you define deliberative democracy ?
2. What, according to Joshua Cohen, are the five main features of the concept of deliberative democracy?
3. Describe the characteristic features of deliberative democracy.

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## 15.8 Further Reading

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1. James Bohman and William Rehg (ed): *Deliberative Democracy*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1997.
2. J. S. Dryzek: *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*, Oxford, OUP, 2000.

## **MODULE - 4**





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## **Unit-16 □ Models of Democracy**

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### **Structure**

- 16.0 Objective**
- 16.1 Introduction**
- 16.2 Meaning of Democracy**
- 16.3 Attributes of Democracy**
- 16.4 Arguments against Democracy**
- 16.5 Models of Democracy**
- 16.6 Contemporary Theories of Democracy**
- 16.7 Some Recent views on Democracy**
- 16.8 Conclusion**
- 16.9 Summing Up**
- 16.10 Probable Questions**
- 16.11 Further Reading**

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### **16.0 Objective**

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The present unit helps us to-

- Understand the multiple meaning of democracy
- Identify the different models of democracy
- To locate the contemporary feminist, neoliberal and new right views with respect to democracy

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## 16.1 Introduction

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The term democracy is no longer tied singly to a form of government. The political coinage of democracy in contemporary times went beyond the territories of an ideal. As a method, it began to imply a set of values and behaviour with which a decision is concluded by the people. In a way, it also denotes of a particular culture involved in a process of a decision making. As a corollary therefore, the concept invited fierce debates not only in political theory but also in general discussion on politics. Since its formal appearance in the Greek city states of the classical period till contemporary times, the concept and practice of democracy has traversed a long way in political history. From a pejorative implication ‘as a rule of the ignorant’ by Plato to a ‘corrupt form of polity’ by Aristotle; democracy as an enduring principle continued to be dominant even in the post modern political landscape. Interestingly, the age old negative connotation of the concept has been replaced with a positive value which is accorded to democracy over time. Though this development is much recent in history and at present, the charge of being labelled as undemocratic is not only uncomfortable but also to be taken a matter of serious offence in global political parlance. Amidst the failure of socialist system within erstwhile Soviet Union and the rising crisis of capitalism in the past years, democracy emerged not only as an universal accepted political system but also perhaps the most successful compelling form of political organisation in history.

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## 16.2 Meaning of Democracy

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The concept of democracy was of Greek origin. The term was derived from the Greek word ‘*demokratia*’ in which ‘*demos*’ meant ‘the people’ and ‘*kratos*’ meaning ‘power or rule’. Democracy thus, means ‘rule by the demos’. The term ‘democracy’ was first used in the fifth century BC by the Greek historian Herodotus in the sense of ‘rule by the people’. However, the nature of the concept was perhaps popularised by Abraham Lincoln Gettysburg Address, delivered in 1864 at the height of the American Civil War. He added both flesh and spirit to the meaning of democracy as government of the people, by the people, for the people. Analysing Lincoln’s definition, D.D.Raphael in *Problems of Political Philosophy* observes that all government is government of the people. Hence, government of the people does not

convey much. As regards 'government for the people' Raphael argues that a benevolent despotism, as much as democracy, may be government for the people. So the essential idea of democratic government is 'government by the people'. This implies that, in effect, people govern themselves that they participate in making the crucial decisions that structure their lives and determine the fate of their society. This participation can take a number of forms.

In classic sense, democracy means the rule of the people, either directly or through elected representatives. In this meaning, democracy is taken not only as rule of the majority but also involving the spirit of equality. Subsequently, even representative form of democracy also recognises the principle of equality. However, this equality is mainly confined to political equality where equal voting right and right to hold public offices are treated as relevant. In other words, it implies a belief that all people are equally capable of, and have a stake in making collective decisions that shape their lives. In a democracy, no one person's opinion or interest is of more value than the other. Hence, the principle which is practiced is 'one person, one vote'. It is based on the idea of equal moral worth of all individuals and against the exclusion of anyone from the political process. Thus, it is against hierarchy or inherited privileges and discrimination.

Democracy is also widely described as a process of selecting governments. This implies free and fair elections under open, multiparty electoral competition and based on universal adult suffrage. Samuel P. Huntington, who is well known for his Clash of Civilization thesis says that 'elections open, free and fair are essence of democracy'. Democracy as government by the people relies heavily on the wisdom of the people. J.S.Mill in his *Considerations on Representative Government* has mentioned two different aspects that go in the name of democracy. He defines 'pure idea of democracy' as 'the government of the whole people by the whole people, equally represented'. Mill contrasts this idea of pure democracy with commonly conceived and practiced idea of democracy as 'the government of the whole people by a mere majority of the people'. In other sense, democracy as a form of government though called the government of the whole people is only the government of the majority. This majority actually elects representatives since representatives are elected on the basis of majority votes, they cannot by definition therefore, represent the minority. The principle of democracy requires that while all public decisions are taken with the approval of the majority, due regard may be given to the view of the minority. However, in a multicultural society where people tend to vote for the candidates belonging to their own caste, region, religion language or culture etc. they may be

divided into permanent majority and minorities. In such a case the principle of democracy requires that different minorities like racial, religious etc. enjoy full freedom to preserve their cultural traits and feel fully safe.

Democracy not merely means a form of government alone. It also imbibes for a culture in which certain intrinsic human values like that of tolerance, equality, freedom and the like is fostered and retained in society. In a democracy, therefore, it is assumed that there will be a diversity of opinions and interests on almost every matter of common concern. Indeed, this diversity is seen as its main strength and it calls for tolerance for all shades of opinion. A democratic society is also called an open society where there is space for all voices however, unpopular or conventional they may be, to be heard. This requires a range of political freedoms like freedom of speech and expression, association and movement among others which are protected by the state. People must have access to information and be able to protest and freely criticise the government and others in order to make informed uncoerced choices and intervene in the decision making process. Thus, the practice of democracy is unthinkable without rights. Thus, democracies are expected to arrive at a consensus.

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### **16.3 Attributes of Democracy**

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It is often argued that a democratic method of making legislation is better than non democratic methods in three ways namely strategically, epistemically and via the improvements of the characters of democratic citizens. Strategically, democracy has an advantage because it forces decision makers to take into account the interests, rights and opinions of most people in society. In this respect, an instrumental argument provided by Amartya Sen is that ‘no substantial famine has ever occurred in any independent country with a democratic form of government and a relatively free press’. The basis of this argument is that politicians in a multiparty democracy with free elections and a free press have incentives to respond to the expressions of needs of the poor.

Epistemologically, democracy is thought to be the best decision making method, on the grounds, that it is generally more reliable in helping participants to discover the right decisions. Because democracy brings a lot of people into the process of decision making, it can take advantage of many sources of information, and of the critical assessment of laws and policies.

It is further argued that democracy tends to make people stand up for themselves more than do other forms of rule. This is because under democracy collective decisions depend more upon the will of the people than those made under monarchy or aristocracy. Hence, in democratic societies, individuals are encouraged to be more autonomous.

Finally, some have argued that democracy tends to enhance the moral qualities of citizens. When they participate in decision making they have to listen to others and they are also called upon to justify themselves to others and they are forced to think partly in terms of the interests of others. Hence, some have argued that democratic processes tend to enhance the autonomy, rationality and morality of participants.

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## **16.4 Arguments against Democracy**

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Critics of democracy can be classified into two groups namely those who are dissatisfied with a particular kind of democratic practice and seek to deepen it and those who are critical of the democratic principle as such. A key objection to democracy is that, it produces incompetent and inefficient governments. According to Plato, democracy is inferior to various forms of monarchy, aristocracy and even oligarchy on the grounds that democracy tends to undermine the expertise that is necessary to properly governed societies. In a democracy, he argues, those who are expert at winning elections and nothing else will eventually dominate democratic politics. Most people do not have the kinds of talents that enable them to think well about the difficult issues that politics involves. Hence, the state will be guided by very poorly worked out ideas.

Hobbes argues that democracy is inferior to monarchy because democracy fosters destabilising dissension among subjects. From his perspective, individual citizens and even politicians are likely not to have a sense of responsibility for the quality of legislation, because no individual makes a significant difference to the outcome of decision making. As a consequence, citizen's concerns are not focused on politics and politicians succeed only by making loud and manipulative appeals to citizens in order to gain more power.

Even J.S.Mill for all his defence of democracy and political participation considered majoritarianism and mediocre government as the biggest weaknesses of

democracy. Not only does majoritarianism exclude minority voices but it lowers the standards of the government. Subsequently, people with a lower level of intelligence perform the most important task of legislation and administration. Mill suggested a number of institutional mechanisms to counter these ills. Mill was particularly concerned about the opinion of minorities, the experts and the geniuses who are sidelined when the majority principle is applied. Mills philosophy thus, combines a value for participation and equality with elitism, where governance is seen as the task of the educated and the experts.

Elite theorists went a step ahead in expressing their dissatisfaction of the democratic functioning and argued in favour of the inevitability of the elite rule. Elite theorists consider a functioning democracy impossible because of the inevitability of concentration of power. Classical elite theorists like Pareto and Mosca says that political power in every society has always been in the hands of a minority, the elite, which has ruled over the majority in its own interest. These elite manage to dominate because they possess exceptional skills specially the psychological attributes and political skills of manipulation and coercion. They are far better organized than the masses and also possess qualities which are considered valuable and hence, use it to justify their privileged position in the society. Michels noted, how despite socialist principles, the actual working of the decision making process tended to concentrate power in the leadership due to bureaucratization and centralization. Not only did the leaders not consult the working class members, the decision taken were often contrary to their interests.

Rajeev Bhargava argues, that the merit of these critiques lies insofar as they expose the myths of democratic practice by exposing who actually wields power. But in considering this concentration of power as inevitable, these critiques affirm a belief in the natural inequality among human beings and are pessimistic in nature.

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## **16.5 Models of Democracy**

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Democracy is often treated as a homogenous and unambiguous phenomenon. It is often assumed that democracy as practiced in western societies is the only legitimate form of democracy. In reality, however, there are a number of rival theories or models of democracy, each offering its own version of popular rule. This highlights not merely the variety of democratic forms and mechanisms, but also more fundamentally, the very different grounds on which democratic rule can be justified.

Even liberal democracy is a misleading term, as competing liberal views of democratic organisation can be identified. The different models are discussed in the following manner :

1. Classical Democracy
2. Protective Democracy
3. Developmental Democracy
4. People's Democracy
5. Participatory Democracy
6. Cosmopolitan Democracy

### **Classical Democracy**

The classical model of democracy is usually associated with the city states of ancient Greece. It is the most celebrated form of direct participatory democracy. Amongst the city states, the most discussed one happened to be the system of rule that developed in Athens. The salient features of Athenian democracy can be summed up in the following manner-

- A) Equal participation by all freemen in the common affairs of the polis (city state) which was regarded as an essential instrument of good life.
- B) Arriving at public decisions in an atmosphere of free discussion and
- C) General respect for law and for the established procedures of the community.

The form of direct democracy that operated in Athens during the fourth and fifth centuries BCE is often portrayed as the only pure or ideal system of popular participation. Athenian democracy developed a very particular kind of direct popular rule, one that has only a very limited application in the modern world. Athenian democracy amounted to a form of government by mass meeting. All major decisions were made by the Assembly or Ecclesia, to which all citizens belonged. This meet takes place atleast forty times a year. What made Athenian democracy so remarkable was the level of political activity of its citizens. Not only did they participate in regular meetings of the Assembly but they were in large numbers, prepared to shoulder the responsibility of public office and decision making. The most influential contemporary critic of this form of democracy was the philosopher Plato. Plato decried democracy because the people were not properly equipped with education to

select the best rulers. Aristotle identified democracy as the rule of the many, that is, of the more numerous members of the community, particularly the poor ones. In his classification of the governments into normal and perverted forms, Aristotle placed democracy among perverted forms since it signified the rule of the mediocre seeking their selfish interests, and not the interest of the state. on a practical level. However, the principal drawback of Athenian democracy was that it could only operate by excluding the mass of the population from political activity. Participation was restricted to Athenian born males who were over 20 years of age. Slaves, women and foreigners had no political rights whatsoever.

### **Protective Democracy**

The idea of democracy as evolved in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century was very different from that of classical democracy of ancient Greece. Democracy then came to be viewed as a mechanism through which the public could participate in political life and protect themselves from the encroachments of government. Hence, it is called Protective Democracy. It was protective in the sense, that it was meant to protect the rights of citizens and safeguard them from the tyranny of state power. The emergence of liberalism as a doctrine and the newly emerging bourgeoisie middle class had placed limits on the absolute powers of the monarch and the feudal aristocracy of the European state from 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. With the emerging new doctrine of individualism, the notion that all individuals are free and autonomous masters of themselves and makers of their own destiny were popularised. Individuals are primarily rational and self interested beings intend on pursuing their desires and goals. What individual requires are the basic condition to pursue this self defined goals. Liberals identify these conditions as rights namely of life, liberty and property which are fundamental and inviolable in nature. The emergence of liberalism is linked to that of capitalism and market society. That is why, property is understood as a fundamental right. An individual's property is considered an extension of the self and an individual is the masters of his/her own self.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century John Locke argued, that that the right to vote was based on the existence of natural rights and in particular on the right to property. If government, through taxation possessed the power to expropriate property, citizens were entitled to protect themselves by controlling the composition of the tax setting body; the legislature. In other words, democracy to mean a system of government by consent' operating through a representative assembly. Political participation in a representative democracy means to control the government and ensure the protection of individual



liberty. Through franchise and competitive elections individuals choose representatives who then form governments on the majority principle. Political decisions can be made only by these representatives and the people can keep a check on the representatives through periodic elections.

The idea of protective democracy is perhaps best understood in the views of two of the key spokesmen of 19<sup>th</sup> century namely English liberals J. Bentham (1748-1832) and James Mill (1773-1836). In their hands, the protective theory of liberal democracy received arguably its most important elaboration: the governors must be held accountable to the governed through political mechanisms (the secret ballot, regular voting and competitions between potential representatives among other things) which give citizens satisfactory means for choosing, authorising and concluding political decisions. Through these mechanisms it was argued a balance could be attempted between might and right, authority and liberty. But despite this decisive step, who exactly were to count as individuals and what the exact nature of their envisaged political participation were remained either unclear or unsettled in the Anglo-American world.

Thus, protective democracy is but a limited and indirect form of democracy. In practice, the consent of the governed is exercised through voting in regular and competitive elections. This thereby, ensures the accountability of those who govern. Political equality is thus, understood in strictly technical terms to mean equal voting rights. Moreover, this is above all, a system of constitutional democracy that operates within a set of formal or informal rules that check the exercise of government power.

Even though the model of representative democracy was based on the principle of equality, in early liberal democracies, franchise or political equality was in effect restricted to a few. It is worth noting that in all early democratic systems of modern western world, the idea of democracy was not based on universal adult franchise rather restricted male citizens had the right to vote in elections. In France, adult male suffrage was abruptly introduced in 1848, but they could not set up a parliamentary government on an enduring basis till 1871. In Britain, parliamentary government had been established on an enduring basis since 1688 but the bulk of male citizens were not granted franchise till 1867. Female franchise has been operative in the United States since 1919, in Britain since 1928 in France since 1945 and in Switzerland all women got their right to vote as late as 1971.

### **Developmental Democracy**

Democracy in the late years also exhibited its concern with the development of

the human individual and the community. This gave rise to quite new models of democratic rule which can broadly be referred to as systems of developmental democracy. The most novel and radical model was developed by J.J.Rousseau. In many respects, Rousseau's ideas mark a departure from the dominant liberal conception of democracy. For Rousseau, democracy was ultimately a means through which human beings could achieve freedom. What gives Rousseau's model its novel character, is his insistence that freedom ultimately means obedience to the 'general will'. Rousseau makes a distinction between the will of the individual ie. the particular will and the will of the community, ie. the general will. Particular will may either be inclined towards general will, or it may turn against it. When an individual is motivated by his momentary self interest, he is acting against the general will. It is called his 'actual will'. On the contrary, when he decides to act in the common interest ie, according to the general will, he is acting on his real will. In other words, real will involves self discipline in the interest of the community. It also serves the individual's real and long term interest which cannot be separated from the common interest. General will is therefore, harmonious. It reflects the real will of all members of the community. In Rousseau's view, such a system of radical developmental democracy required not merely political equality but a relatively high level of economic equality.

Rousseau's theories have helped to shape the modern idea of participatory democracy taken up by New Left thinkers in the 1960s and the 1970s. In fact at the heart of this model is the notion of grassroot democracy. This implies a belief that political power should be exercised at the lowest possible level. Nevertheless, Rousseau's own theories have been criticised for distinguishing between citizen's true wills and their felt or subjective wills. The danger of this is that, if the general will cannot be established by simply asking citizens of what they want since they may be guided by their self interest, there is scope for the general will perhaps by a dictator claiming to act in the 'true' interests of society. According to A.Heywood, Rousseau is therefore, sometimes seen as the architect of so called totalitarian democracy.

However, along with Rousseau model of developmental democracy can also be rooted in the writings of John Stuart Mill. For Mill, democracy is essentially an educational experience as it enhances the political understanding of the citizens and helped them to achieve a higher level of personal development. For Mill, a representative system must create maximum space for people to take part in the functioning of the government and not restrict their involvement by merely allowing

them to vote. He considered participation important because it develops the confidence of the people in their ability to govern themselves. That is why, he suggested for broadening of popular participation arguing that the franchise should be extended to all but those who are illiterate. In the process, he suggested, that suffrage should also be extended to women. Mill was however, aware of the dangers of democracy. He rejected the idea of formal political equality. Following Plato, Mill did not believe that all political opinions are of equal value. He feared that democracy always contains the threat that individual liberty and minority rights may be crushed in the name of the people. Mill's particular concern was that democracy would undermine debate, criticism and intellectual life in general by encouraging people to accept the will of the majority, thereby, promoting uniformity and dull conformism. He believed strongly that majority is not always right and wisdom cannot be determined mere quantitatively. So, he supported the idea of deliberative democracy or parliamentary democracy.

### **People's Democracy**

The concept of people's democracy is usually related to the Marxian tradition which analyses political system mostly in terms of class character. Marxists criticise the prevalent form of liberal democracy because it harbours the capitalist system in which the majority of people comprising workers is deprived of power. Liberal democracy exclusively serves the interests of the bourgeoisie ie. the capitalist class. Marxists therefore, dubbed liberal democracy as the bourgeois democracy. In spite of its vast paraphernalia of representative institutions, liberal democracy hardly serves the interests of the people on whose behalf power is exercised. Marx believed that with a overthrow of capitalism, democracy is likely to flourish. He was highly sceptical of liberal or parliamentary democracy and viewed it essentially as a bourgeois or capitalist democracy. He had anticipated that after the socialist revolution, bourgeois democracy would be replaced by a 'commune system'. Communes were envisaged to be small communities who would manage their own affairs and would elect their delegates for the larger administrative units like districts and towns. These larger units would in turn elect their delegates for the still larger administrative areas, like national administration. This system is described as 'pyramidal structure of direct democracy'. They were described as 'people's democracies' in order to distinguish them from western type liberal democracies. According to O.P. Gauba, this term was adopted to indicate a new type of democracy. Conventional use of democracy stands for liberal democracy which is based on a specific procedure of government formation. Hence, it may be identified as 'procedural democracy'. On

the other hand, people's democracy focuses on the substance of democracy i.e. safeguarding the interests of the ordinary people. Hence, it claimed to be identified as 'substantive democracy'. In its view, interests of the working classes is coterminous with the interest of the people.

This form of democracy was developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in communist states like that of former Soviet Union and China. However, in erstwhile Soviet Union democracy owed more to the ideas of V.I.Lenin than it did to those of Marx. Although Lenin's 1917 slogan 'All power to the Soviets' had kept alive the notion of commune democracy, in reality power in Soviet Russia quickly fell into the hands of the Bolshevik Party. In establishing itself as the vanguard of the working class the communist party claim to represent the genuine interests of the proletariat and thus, guide it to the realisation of its revolutionary potential. However, in doing so, what really turned out to be a major weakness was that this model failed to build any mechanisms for checking the power of the communist party.

### **Participatory Democracy**

The major idea behind the democracy includes the authority of governance to rest upon people themselves. That is how the journey of democracy began during classical age of ancient Greece. However, when the size of a democratic community expands geographically with a variety of composition in terms of race, religion, language and culture, etc the distance between the people and their representatives is likely to widen. While elitist theory do not places much significance to citizen's participation as one of the necessary condition of democracy, the model of participatory democracy repudiates it. Participatory democracy emphasises on political participation of people as the basic principle of democracy. Political participation, however, refers to active involvement of individual and groups in the governmental processes affecting their lives. The chief exponent of this form of democracy was Rousseau in whose hand the doctrine of popular sovereignty gained ground.

In participatory democracy citizens themselves play an active role in the process of formulation and implementation of public policies and decisions, their activity is called political participation. Conventional mode of political participation is called voting, contesting for public for a public office, campaigning for a political party or contributing to the management of a community project like public safety, cleanliness drive or the maintenance of a public park etc. Interestingly, an act of opposition or public protest also involves political participation. They are the manifestation of a strong awareness of public interest.

The present day champions of participatory democracy argue that representative democracy give little opportunity to its citizens for any significant participation in the decision making process. In modern large scale states, the objective of participatory democracy are sought to be achieved through (a) Decentralisation of administration in which many decisions are left to local communities, as in the case of expansion of Panchayati Raj in India; and (b) Extensive use of referendum as prevalent in Switzerland.

In contemporary political theory, citizen participation is sought to be justified mainly on three grounds:

- a) Instrumental view- It asserts that citizen participation is aimed at promoting or defending the interest of the participant.
- b) Developmental or educational view- This holds that citizens participation enhances the participants general moral, social and political awareness.
- c) Communitarian view- This justifies participation on the ground that it contributes to the common good.

However, the limitations of participatory democracy cannot be ignored. Firstly, the champions of participatory democracy insists only on increasing citizens participation within the existing democratic system. They do not suggest any alternative system for its implementation. Secondly, the advocates of participatory democracy seem to be too optimistic. Beneficial results of public decisions, policies and programmes come very late. Ordinary people are not always endowed with adequate patience and insight that would enable them to make a correct assessment of the situation. If they are encouraged for too much participation, they may take their grievances and disputes to streets, and disrupt normal life.

### **Cosmopolitan Democracy**

With globalization extraordinary changes have taken place in international politics. The first half of the 1990s championed the idea of democracy but its efficacy as a national form of politics came to be questioned. David Held, in his article, on Cosmopolitan Democracy has identified the emerging world since 1990s to be doubly faced. On the one hand, it has fostered the extension of democracy and on the other; it has revealed tensions within nation states. He argued that, cold war by imposing limited autonomy to states had managed to suppress many forms of domestic conflict. However, with an end to it domestic discord reopened.

Infact, David Held has pointed out several impacts of globalisation on the recent functioning of democracy. He argued that, first; the locus of political power no longer rests with the national government rather it is shared by diverse forces and agencies operating at regional, national and international levels. Secondly, 'self determining collectivity' no longer confines itself within the single nation state alone. Political communities both within and across are now beyond the reach of individual nation state. Thirdly, the operatives of the states have become so complex with international and regional interaction that it affects the autonomy and sovereignty of a nation. Finally, the late twentieth century witnesses a world where transnational actors and forces cut across the boundaries of nations in diverse ways. Subsequently, it is found that the powerful states make decision not just for their people but for others as well. Such overlapping spheres of influence, interference and interest creates dilemmas at the centre of democratic thought. This worldwide development opened up the possibility of a cosmopolitan democracy.

According to David Held, cosmopolitan democracy involves the development of administrative capacity and independent political resources at regional and global levels as a necessary complement to those in local and national politics. So cosmopolitan democracy would override the states in defined spheres of activity which have visible transnational and international consequences and call for regional or global initiatives for democratic legitimacy.

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## 16.6 Contemporary Theories of Democracy

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### Pluralist Theory

Pluralist theory of democracy is based on pluralist concept of power distribution in society. Pluralist model appears in two forms- one treats democracy as competition between plurality of elites and the second treats democracy as negotiation between pluralities of power centres in society. While the first is based on assumptions of power concentration in the hands of variety of elite; the second is based on the assumption of power distribution amongst a variety of groups. The first systematic development of pluralist theory can be traced in the work of James Madison entitled *The Federalist Papers*. Unlike the most liberals, Madison argued that unchecked democratic rule might simply lead to majoritarianism, to the crushing of individual rights and to the expropriation of property in the name of the people. He stressed upon the multiplicity of interests and groups in society. He believed unless each such group possessed a

political voice, stability and order would be impossible. He therefore, proposed a system of divided government based on the separation of powers that offered a variety of access points to competing groups and interests. Thus, the system of rule which he envisaged is often referred as Madisonian democracy.

The most influential modern exponent of pluralist theory is Robert Dahl. Robert Dahl in his *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (1956) developed a model of democratic process which he described as polyarchy. According to him, polyarchy means a rule by many, as distinct by rule from all citizens. The key feature of such a system of pluralist democracy is that competition between parties at election time, and the ability of interest or pressure groups to articulate their views freely, establishes a reliable link between the government and the governed and creates a channel of communication between the two. Robert Dahl has given the theory of polyarchy which holds that democratic government must take into account interests of many groups in society compulsorily. Dahl's study of local politics in New Haven, USA explored how decision making is done. Based on his conclusions and observations, Dahl suggested a model of democracy where various groups participate in decision making. Infact, he suggested there is widespread dispersal of power among various interest groups and these groups compete and negotiate as per their issue-areas. Thus, polyarchy to Dahl, refers to a model of democratic decision making where multiple groups participate in decision making without anyone of them dominating. Infact, the pluralist theory calls for the revision of the democratic theory itself. In its view, policy making is actually done neither by the representatives of a coherent majority, nor by an autonomous and unresponsive elite, but is the product of the interaction among various groups. This theory goes to the extent of claiming that since public policy is largely an outcome of the bargaining among groups interested in a given policy issue, the form of government becomes almost insignificant.

On the other side, the system of rule by multiple minorities may simply have been a device to prevent the majority from exercising political power. According to A. Heywood, a further problem is the danger of what has been called 'pluralist stagnation'. This occurs as organised groups and economic interests become so powerful that they create a long jam resulting in the problem of government 'overload'. In such circumstances, a pluralist system may simply become ungovernable. Finally, there is the problem identified by Dahl in later works such as *A Preface to Economic Democracy* (1985) notably that the unequal ownership of economic resources tends to concentrate political power in the hands of the few and deprive it from the many. This line of argument has given rise to neopluralism.

Arnold M. Rose's *The Power Structure* reflects Dahl's conclusions on power distribution. He studied the policies of the National Associations of Manufacturers and the United States Chamber of Commerce, the two bodies that represent economic elite. Rose, unlike Dahl concludes that plurality of elites, relatively small are operating in different spheres. Dahl and Rose reached more or less the same conclusion and suggest pluralism as the basis of power distribution. However, while Dahl does not hint at elite within the respective groups, Rose tends to hold that there are pluralities of elites who are competing. Rose sounds like Schumpeter who talks of decision making amongst competing elites. Rose's pluralism suggests elite pluralism.

### **Elitist Theory**

Elitist theories were originally developed in the field of Sociology to explain the behaviour of men in a social setting. Their implications in the field of politics posed a challenge to democratic theory. This was in turn revised by several thinkers. Broadly speaking, the elitist theories hold that every society consists of two categories of men namely the elite or the minority in a social collectivity and the masses or the majority which is governed by the elite. This theory argues that masses are unintelligent and apathetic and elite are organised, capable, intelligent and have leadership qualities.

Classical elitists, such as V. Pareto, G. Mosca and R. Michels believed that democracy was no more than a foolish delusion because political power is always exercised by a privileged minority namely the elites. Pareto and Mosca conceptualised general perspective on elite rule and view society divided into elite and non elite. They pointed out that elite provides leadership and are capable of rule. Michel carried out the study of oligarchic phenomenon in political parties. In his study, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, he analysed the inner dynamics of decision making and power distribution of European Socialist Parties and Trade Unions with particular emphasis on German Socialist Party. According to him, democracy requires organisation in the form of parties to represent the masses because of vastness and complexity of society, which will not allow any other way of democratic participation. Political parties operate through structured organization with leadership, full time politicians and officials. Due to division of labour, hierarchy and control, decision making and resource allocation becomes confined in the hands of a small group of leaders. This produces rule and control of small elites. Michels calls this as 'Iron Law of Oligarchy'. This



means any organization is bound to degenerate in elite rule.

Whereas classical elitists strove to prove that democracy was always a myth, modern elitist theorists have tended to highlight how far particular political systems fall short of the democratic ideal. A distinction can be drawn between a two set of elitist theorists. The early elite theorists argue that due to omnipresence of elites in every society, there is no possibility of any other form of government than rule of the elite either through circulation of elite or Iron Law of Oligarchy. They deny the possibility of democracy as rule of the people. Pareto, Mosca Michels and Ostrogorski are champions of this position. There is a second group of elite theorists, who argue that despite elite being present as the leaders, competition between elites and elections at periodic intervals give sufficient chance to the people to express themselves and this choice of elites represents democracy.

Karl Manheim's *Ideology and Utopia* upheld the possibility of democracy even when they agree the presence of elites as a fundamental reality in society. He maintained that though policy formulation was in the hands of the elite, the very fact that the elites can be removed in elections make the people master. He thinks that this very limitation is sufficient proof of democracy and accountability of elite. In fact, Manheim's views reflect an attempt to reconcile theory of political elites and democracy.

Joseph A. Schumpeter in his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1942) pointed out that the forms of government should be distinguished by their institutions, specially by their methods of appointing and dismissing the supreme makers of law and policy. This implies that firstly, in a democracy political decisions are taken by the 'leadership', and not by the people themselves. Secondly, there is a free competition among the leaders for winning people's votes. In other words, the role of the people is reduced to choosing their rulers from the competing elites. Schumpeter does not allow any moral content in democracy and treats it merely as market mechanism where voters are only consumers and the politicians act as entrepreneurs. Hence, this theory is often called the economic theory of democracy.

Following Schumpeter, Anthony Downs too developed his model of competitive elitism. Downs argued that a system of open and competitive elections guarantees democratic rule because it placed government in the hands of the party whose philosophy, values and policies correspond most closely to the preferences of the largest group of voters. Thus, while early elitist theory of democracy in the hands of

Pareto, Mosca Michels and Ostrogorski was elitist, in the hands of Manheim and Schumpeter, it acquired the characteristics of competitive elitist model, where elites compete for vote. Therefore, democracy simply turns out to be a political method which acts as a means of making political decision through competitive struggle for gaining popular votes.

### **Marxian Theory**

The Marxian theory of democracy revolves around three major thrust areas firstly, a critique of the bourgeois democracy, secondly, theory of dictatorship of proletariat and thirdly, social democracy leading to a classless society.

Marxists challenge the liberal conception of the state as a neutral body. There are two strands of thinking about political power in the writings of Marx and Engels. In the first instance, Marx declared in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) that the state and its agencies are the instruments of dominant class interest. Following an instrumentalist view, the Marxists argue that a liberal state is actually an instrument of the bourgeois rule where there is no equality, no freedom and hence, no democracy. According to them, the bourgeois democracy is a class democracy dominated by the bourgeoisie. In the second instance, Marx and Engels talk about the 'relative autonomy of the state' from the dominant class. The practice of parliamentary democracy and the compulsions of elections do lead governments to respond to some demands of the working class majority. But for Marxists, this is at best a short term measure because the state cannot go against the long term interests of capital.

Marxists acknowledge the emancipator potential of liberalism because it rejects hierarchy and affirms the equal moral worth of all individuals. That is why, it appears that Lenin is not opposed to democracy as such, but only bourgeois democracy. Democracy provides a meaningful means for equality. Lenin considered democracy as significant step for achieving 'formal equality', ie. 'equality of labour and wages' and equality in ownership of means of production. This is the stage of dictatorship of proletariat, where democracy is realised not as a class concept but as people's democracy.

In his claim to recall liberal democracy as bourgeois democracy John Plamenatz in his work entitled *Democracy and Illusion* had advanced the following arguments-

Firstly, in the context of inequality of wealth and resources, power and influence will be possessed by those who acquire capacity to possess them through education and other such entry.

Secondly, in the context of large organisations, power and influence belongs to the leaders than to rank and file

Thirdly, in the context of social inequalities, leaders soon acquire ambition, privileged position and lose touch with their followers

Finally, power and influence is exercised by those who have information and wealthy are better placed to get information and control its distribution. According to Plamenatz, due to these reasons, democracy is not real in liberal capitalist society.

The above arguments, however, clearly suggests that the Marxian concept of democracy is not related to form of government is mainly linked to procedure of how leaders are elected.

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## **16.7 Some Recent views on Democracy**

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### **Feminist view**

Feminist critique of democracy rests on the following major arguments-

1. The liberal distinction between the public and the private
2. Gendered division of labour
3. Under representation of women in political institutions
4. Democratic theory being insensitive to the realities of women's lives.

### **The liberal distinction between the Public and the Private**

Feminists argue that relation between men and women is based on unequal power relations and this is mainly due to the liberal distinction between the Public and Private. Family and the household is a part of the private sphere and hence, kept out of politics which solely lies under a public domain. Once being outcasted from politics, women's interest therefore, were placed out of democratization. Women's labour subsequently was not regarded as productive enough to constitute for paid labour. Domestic arena therefore, turns out to be a site of unequal power structure and therefore, an arena in need for democratization.

### **Gender division of Labour**

According to Janaki Srinivasan, gendered division of labour and power in the private sphere is linked to the unequal distribution of political status and power in the public sphere. Western countries, which have the longest history of democracy,

but even there women were the last category to get the right to vote. Most political thinkers explicitly excluded women from the category of citizenship on the grounds of their natural inferiority and incapability.

### **Under representation**

In contemporary democratic system women despite their political equality continue to be grossly underrepresented in political institutions and decision making structures. Further political equality has been undermined on the grounds of sexual, social and economic inequality.

### **Democratic theory being insensitive to the realities of women's lives**

Democratic theory fails to realise that substantive equality for women have to be of a distinctive kind. It understands equality mechanically as mere removal of differences. So, formal political equality recognizes no difference among people and socio-economic equality understands difference as a disadvantage and seeks to remove them. But the idea of disadvantage is based on a notion of comparison which is always based on a particular standard.

### **Neoliberal view**

The neoliberal view was favoured by public choice theorists like James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock. They contend that elites and their allies will tend to expand the powers of government and bureaucracy for their own interests, and that this expansion will occur at the expense of a largely inattentive public. Only those interest groups that are guided by powerful economic interests are likely to succeed in organising to influence the government. Furthermore, they argue that such interest group will tend to produce highly inefficient government, because they will attempt to advance their interests in politics while spreading the costs to others. Thus, neoliberals argue that any way of organising a large and powerful democratic state is likely to produce serious inefficiencies.

However, the neoliberal account of democracy also shares certain inherent limitations. First, citizens in modern societies have more ambitious conceptions of social justice and the common good than are realizable by the minimal state. The neoliberal account thus, implies a very serious curtailment of democracy of its own. Second, the neoliberal approach ignores the problem of large private concentrations of wealth and power that are capable of pushing small states around for their own benefit, and of imposing their wills on populations without their consent. The

assumptions that lead neoliberals to be sceptical about the large modern state imply equally disturbing problems for the large private concentrations of wealth in a neoliberal society.

### **New Right view**

The post 1973 decade saw one of the substantive economic difficulties for most advanced industrial countries including Britain and France. Economic growth and relative prosperity received a severe blow in these countries compared to their preceding decades. These new conditions provoked a rightward electoral shift in the majority of western democracies. These rightward shifts were pronounced in Britain and USA and were associated with a grouping of ideas and movements collectively termed as the “New Right”. It is difficult to specify the term “New Right” as it has been variously applied to government public policy and administrations. Infact, the term cannot be used to any particular ideas, theorists and politicians since there is not one simple and coherent set of principles but rather several not necessarily linked together.

Kenneth Hoover recognises three main set of ideas within liberalism that have its influence on the arguments forwarded by the New Right. First, liberals defend the superiority of the markets in producing economic prosperity and political freedom. These “traditional liberal values” may be reduced to an emphasis upon the individual, a limited role to the state and support for market processes. Secondly, following public choice analysis emphasis is given on application of economic techniques and assumptions to political and social behaviour. Therefore, constitution should be redesigned to control public spending and market practices to be introduced in the Public Sector. Thirdly, liberalism embraces the ideas of “libertarians” who promote a more trenchant version of liberal economic and political principles but who remain a distant subgroup of liberalism.

However, here it must be noted that liberal values are not the only ones associated with New Right. There also exists a set of moral and social arguments too. According to A. Heywood, New Right theorists are keen advocates of the free market, believing that economies work best when left alone by the government. They have focussed upon the danger of what has been called ‘democratic overload’. This overload, on part of the government can be seen to be a consequence of the electoral process. Thus, according to Samuel Brittan, electoral politics amounts to a self defeating process in which politicians are encouraged to compete for power by offering increasingly unrealistic promises to the electorate. Voters are attracted by promises of higher public spending because they calculate that the cost will be spread

over the entire population. According to Brittan the economic consequences of unrestrained democracies are high levels of inflation fuelled by public borrowing, and a tax burden that destroys enterprise and undermines growth. New Right theorists therefore, tend to see democracy in strictly protective terms, regarding it essentially as a defence against arbitrary government rather than a means of bringing about social transformation.

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## 16.8 Conclusion

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Discussion on democracy thus, suggests that there are divergent views on the very nature and desirability of democracy. The concept had traversed a long way to indicate a mere political system to a way of life in contemporary times. The demand of democratization at all levels of life had broadly extended its jurisdiction and tends to develop a culture based on equality and collective decision making. It calls for an end of authoritarianism at all levels of institutions, be it social or political. However, democracy as a way of life could flourish only when a higher level of tolerance, on part of the individual and institutions are encouraged, so that the voices of the opposition could be raised as comfortably and seriously like the established voices of the existing society. Till then, democracy would just be a fish out of water which may be sustained by artificial means but at the cost of sacrificing its very essence.

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## 16.9 Summing Up

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- Democracy not merely means a form of government alone. It also imbibes for a culture in which certain intrinsic human values like that of tolerance, equality, freedom and the like is fostered and retained in society.
- Democracy as a method of making legislation is better than non democratic methods in three ways namely strategically, epistemically and via the improvements of the characters of democratic citizens.
- Critics of democracy can be classified into two groups namely those who are dissatisfied with a particular kind of democratic practice and seek to deepen it and those who are critical of the democratic principle as such.
- There are a number of rival theories or models of democracy namely Classical Democracy, Protective Democracy, Developmental Democracy, People's Democracy, Participatory Democracy and Cosmopolitan Democracy.

- Apart from models there are several contemporary theories on democracy like Pluralist Theory, Elitist theory, Marxian Theory and so on.

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## 16.10 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Explain the meaning of democracy. What are its attributes and disadvantages?
2. Analyse how the elitist theory has critiqued the principles of democracy?
3. What is People's democracy? Why does it regard liberal democracy as bourgeois democracy?

### Long Questions :

1. Examine the different models of democracy.
2. Analyse the contemporary theories on democracy.
3. Explain the contemporary views on democracy.

### Short Questions :

1. Write a short note on cosmopolitan democracy
2. Examine the feminist view on democracy.
3. Discuss briefly after Kenneth Hoover, the main set of ideas within liberalism that have its influence on the arguments forwarded by the New Right.

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## 16.11 Further Reading

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1. Held, David, *Models of Democracy*, Cambridge : Polity Press, 2006.
2. Heywood A. *Politics*, London, Macmillan Press Ltd. 1997.
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## **Unit-17 □ Political Participation**

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### **Structure**

- 17.0 Objective**
- 17.1 Introduction**
- 17.2 Meaning of Political Participation**
- 17.3 Factors affecting Political Participation**
- 17.4 Types of Political Participation**
- 17.5 Political Non Participation**
- 17.6 Voting Behaviour**
- 17.7 Political Participation of Women**
- 17.8 Conclusion**
- 17.9 Summing Up**
- 17.10 Probable Questions**
- 17.11 Further Reading**

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### **17.0 Objective**

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The present unit enables us to understand

- The meaning of Political Participation
- The classification related to Political Participation
- The notion of non participation in the realm of politics
- Factors affecting the voting behaviour with special reference to India
- How the political participation of women are changing with the interaction of different dynamics of politics

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### **17.1 Introduction**

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Of late, the nature of electoral politics signifies the maturity and efficacy of



democracy in a country. Liberal democracy sees citizenship as the principal prerequisite of the democratic system where the citizens act as an active participant in the processes of decision making around public policy. This is based upon the principles that citizens should be considered the best judge of their own interests. They are capable of making social and political decisions and also hold the key to political influence through the media of participation, discussion, voting and through the movement towards political equality. This perspective obliges elective representatives and public servants to be cognisant of the values, beliefs and needs of the citizenry, to cultivate necessary levels of political competence in the citizenry and to activate those sections of the citizenry who generally fail to articulate their views. This therefore, suggests for participatory processes to avail the requisite political need. Thus, political participation turns out to a cornerstone of democracy and the primary mechanism through which citizens influence political officials and hold their governments accountable. So, it provides the ideological and philosophical bases for the relationship between a state and its citizens.

Ajit Chaudhuri in one of his article has highlighted three inherent conflicts that citizens' participation entails. Firstly, public policy in modern societies is complicated and decision making around it requires expertise, vision and strategy. At the same time, modern societies see value in extending the democratic base of such decision making through participation but participation is inherently contentious, confused and conflicting. It is rarely possible to maximise both these value preferences. Secondly, meaningful citizen participation affects power relationships in society by increasing the role of ordinary citizens in decision making, and thereby simultaneously reducing that of the elite. The view that reduced power differentials would lead to better public policy and therefore, to better governance is in sharp contrast with the view that the maintenance of differentials is a precondition to social order and that the elite are better able to handle society's decision making responsibilities. Thirdly, participation requires participants who are motivated to act. Empirical evidence suggests, that such motivation is negligible among the general citizenry but high among organised interest groups looking to use apathy around public decision making processes to bend policy towards their aims. Needless to say, that any decision on the usage of participatory processes has to take into account the above stated three dilemmas and adequately address them for a better planning, implementing and monitoring of public services.

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## **17.2 Meaning of Political Participation**

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Political Participation, as one of the basic concept in political science has been

defined by scholars in different ways. The concept has gained a key place in contemporary political science in general and political sociology in particular. In a very general sense, political participation essentially means taking part in politics. However, getting involved in politics may imply participation at varying degrees and at different levels. For instance, some may be highly active and may even choose politics as a career while there may be others who may appear to abstain completely from political activity and may even refuse to apply polling right. As a concept, political participation includes both the cited extremes and as obvious therefore, makes the concept complex and highly controversial. Adoption of a standard definition on the concept automatically tends to include or excludes certain activity from the purview of political participation thereby, leading to debates in ascertaining an activity to be regarded at all as an act of participation into politics. For example, political participation is defined as those voluntary actions in which people seek to influence the making of public policy, then the emphasis on voluntary actions appears to exclude those forms of mass participation that are obligatory or coerced as for example the requirement of shows of symbolic support for authoritarian regimes. Such a definition might further exclude the act of voting in democratic countries where voting is required by law. The recent Taliban occupancy in Afghanistan might invite almost a similar debate with regard to the concept.

There have been several attempts in Political Science to define political participation and analyse its nature from different perspective. Sidney Verba and Norman Nie state that 'political participation will refer to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly and indirectly in the formation and influencing of public policy.' They view political participation as legal activities which are aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and the actions they take. Samuel P. Huntington and Joan M. Nelson defined political participation as 'the activity by private citizens designed to influence governmental decision making.' This is almost similar to Verba and Nie's definition. Michael Rush has viewed political participation from a rather broader angle. To him, 'political participation is the involvement of the individual at various levels of activity in the political system, ranging from non involvement to the holding of political office.' This definition sheds the legal overtones of the earlier two definitions. However, in almost all definitions there is a latent emphasis on voluntary participation by the people. Obligatory or coerced mass action, such as the show of symbolic support for authoritarian rules, is not considered as political participation. Infact, it is a point of debate among the political scientists whether political participation should include only voluntary participation by the people or otherwise. A more inclusive definition was provided by G. Parry, G. Moyser and N.Day. According to them, 'political participation consists of

taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies. This implies to include those actions which seeks to shape the attitudes of decision makers to matters yet to be decided, or it may be action in protest at the outcome of some decision.' According to Parry, 'political participation is not confined to successful actions only. Those actions that fail to fulfil their desired goal are also regarded as political participation. The present definition therefore, broadens the ambit of political participation.

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### **17.3 Factors affecting Political Participation**

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Political scientists have identified a number of socio-economic and political factors which influence the degree and rate of political participation. Robert E. Lane makes a meticulous study to identify those socio-psychological and political variables to explain various forms of political participation in USA. His generalisation could be easily taken into consideration for understanding the nature of political participation, in general. All these factors are not equally effective and important at all places and at all times. Their relative importance and effectiveness are time-place specific. The different factors as identified, can be summed up in the following manner-

#### **a) Psychological factors**

The psychological factor emerges from individual personality traits and cognitive structures. Such structures involves political activities of man's need for power, competition and achievements, affiliation, aggression, money prestige, status, recognition, approval, manipulation, sympathy and responsibility. Participation may also be classified in terms of goals. These are- instrumental and consummatory. Instrumental political activities are primarily oriented towards concrete goals such as the party's victory in the election. Consummatory or expressive activities are aimed at more immediate satisfaction. For example, common people who cast their vote and feel elated for being involved in the decision making process.

#### **b) Social factors**

Political participation is determined to a great extent by social factors such as education, income, age, place of residence, religion etc. Some of these factors for convenience are discussed below-

- i) Education - Education acts as an important determinant in formulating reasonable thinking and voting. It is widely understood, that there is a natural and necessary correlation between an individual's educational

qualifications and his/her participation in politics. Almond and Verba opine that education attracts the individual towards democratic political culture. Education gives information about politics and expands the horizon of one's interest in the political process. It enables the individual to develop the skill for political participation.

- ii) **Income** - People belonging to the higher income groups are generally found to be interested in political participation. This however, does not mean that a rise in income has a uniformly proportionate effect on political participation. Although, income at the individual level is an important correlate of political participation, it may not necessarily be so at the national level. A recent study contradicts the facts and claims that low income groups are easily mobilized and actively participate in political activities. Vendors, hawkers, riksha pullers, auto drivers etc. are now more politically vigilant than the middle class and their turn out in polls at times outnumber the middle class people.
- iii) **Age** - Along with education and income age and sex are also sometimes important in explaining political participation. Those who are too young lack experience about politics. The lack of stability and security at the early age usually makes the young evasive of political participation. Older people on the other hand, cannot participate very actively due to the lack of physical fitness and declining political efficacy. Middle aged citizens are usually free from the problems of the too young or the too old and tend to participate more actively. However, there can be exceptions to this general rule depending upon the type of political participation. For example, if within the domain of political participation the protests movements of the students are included then such movements launched by students and youths of different countries shows that the above explanation no longer holds good.
- iv) **Place of residence** - It is often argued that an individual's place of residence has its impact upon his/her fate of political participation. Usually, urbanites are found to be more participative than their rural counterparts. City dwellers get greater opportunities of education which helps in their greater understanding of political issues. They are much more exposed to different forms of mass media. It makes them more informed about politics. Rural people are generally denied these opportunities. This negatively affects their rate of participation. However, such a rural-urban divide does not hold good in all cases. Researches have shown that in Japan, the rural

folk participate more than the city people. Again, it is also suggested that the longer a person resides in a given community, the greater are the chances of his/her political participation.

- v) Religion - Some studies on political participation have attempted to indicate that religion also sometimes has an impact on political participation. It has been shown mainly in the context of the western political systems that generally catholics participate more in elections that involves issues like legislation on birth control or matters touching the affairs of educational institutions imbued with catholic beliefs. The impact of religion on politics is more evident in political systems that are not secular in the real sense of the term. Religions in such cases are often used in various ways as a major component of political behaviour – particularly in the arena of electoral politics and also outside its boundary.

**c) Economic factors**

Economy has an impact in formulating political participation. Affluent class of the society either controls political participation through muscle and money or tries to maintain the status quo of the political system. They rebel against the evils of the society and clamour for positive change. But the people at the lowest economic ebb do not rationalise their voting behaviour. They are swayed by emotions and mobilised by local area elites. Therefore, in a developed society the level of political participation is high as compared to the developing society.

**d) Political factors**

Political participation is no doubt a political activity, but it is highly influenced by non political variables like caste, community etc. However, it cannot be suggested that political factors are of no use. They do play a crucial role in articulating political participation. The natures of political system have impact on the political participation. Constitutional structure, election procedure, party system, role of press and the functions of the organs of state decides the voting behaviour in any political system. Political orientations, affiliations ideological commitments and cognition of issues and events determine political participation.

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## **17.4 Types of Political Participation**

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Earlier citizen's involvement in the political process was regarded as the only

form of political participation. Then the perspective of the concept was limited. However, with the widening of the concept of politics from state centric, institutional and legal analysis to individual socio-political behaviour or interaction, the scope of the concept of political participation was enhanced beyond electoral participation. Political participation, thus, can broadly be classified into two types namely-

1. Participation in the electoral process
2. Participation through other modes

### **1. Participation in the electoral process**

Modern day democracies are indirect, representative democracies. To realize the idea of representative democracy in practice, various institutional arrangements are needed. The electoral system is one of the most important of these. It is through the electoral process that individuals choose their representatives who perform the act of governing on their behalf. Shefali Roy in her book on Political Sociology has highlighted some of the major types of political participation.

- a) Voting - Electorate in order to safeguard themselves and secure their rights needs to be critical in analysing government performance. Citizens must not be guided by social psychological pressures, rather, should cast votes on the basis of political efficacy. So voting becomes not only a political right of a citizen but also a basic duty. Adult franchise is universally practiced where an adult citizen takes initiative to vote and to control the reigns of power holders.
- b) Campaigning - An individual can take part in the electoral processes in a number of ways, for instance as a voter, as a candidate, taking part in election campaigns, discussing politics, distributing party literature, attending political meetings and so on. In whatever ways a citizen takes part, the individual actually performs the act of political participation. Such participation naturally assumes greater importance in a democratic political system. One such major form of political participation is campaigning. Citizens actively involve themselves in canvassing. Citizens use their vehicles, money or man power in canvassing for a particular political party or for a particular political candidate. Though they are not the main political actor, yet they seek and capture power as a reward of their loyalty towards a party or a person. Those persons who have keen interest in political affairs motivate masses to cast vote, and makes an effort to produce collective mobility.
- c) Self interest - Self interest makes an individual an active citizen. They are

continuously involved in political activities right from reading newspapers to taking processions. They always assess and express the performance of the government through processions and debates. Moreover, they always remain ready for forming interest groups with the government officials to get their work or others work done with or without gratification.

- d) Collective activity - In such a type of political participation, citizens do not act on their own rather joins a group to influence the decision making process. The citizens may even put pressure on the government and get certain policies framed. They work for collective gain, but in most of the cases, they promote a small group of interests. Such an activity is mainly the output of vested interests.

## **2. Participation through other modes**

In addition to taking part in the electoral process and voting, there are many other ways by which the individual can participate in politics. A number of political scientists have attempted to identify and classify different types of political participation. Anthony Birch has included many other kinds of activities than that of merely voting, within the purview of political participation. These are, for example, active membership of a political party or a pressure group, taking part in political demonstrations, industrial strikes with political objectives and similar activities aimed at changing public policy.

While identifying different forms of political participation, Michael Rush and P. Althoff arrange them in a hierarchical order on the basis of the degree or extent of participation. They place the types of activities in a descending order-

- i) Holding political or administrative office
- ii) Seeking political or administrative office
- iii) Active membership in a political organization
- iv) Passive membership in a political organization
- v) Active membership of a quasi political organization
- vi) Passive membership of a quasi political organization
- vii) Participation in public meetings and demonstration
- viii) Participation in informal political discussion
- ix) General interest in politics

- x) Voting
- xi) Political Apathy

What is significant in this hierarchical arrangement is that the act of voting has been placed almost at the lowest level. The argument forwarded is that in all political systems the election is an occasional, periodic happening. Moreover, the act of voting requires minimum involvement and labour on part of the individual.

Milbrath's classification tends to show that political participation basically is of two types namely active and passive. This distinction actually is a necessary outcome of the most common fact that political participation in every society has a cost that involves time, energy and resources. Not all people are equally able or even willing to bear these costs and hence, all are not direct and active participants in every society. Political participation may further be classified in terms of its purpose as instrumental and expressive. Instrumental political participation is essentially directed to the achievement of concrete goals like securing party victory or the passage of a bill or just a rise in one's status or influence. Expressive political participation, on the other hand, does not aim at the realisation of any concrete goal. It is concerned with some immediate satisfaction or a mere release of feeling. Thus, some vote because they are really interested in the political results flowing from the elections or in any material gain for themselves, but because they just have a feeling of satisfaction in exercising their voting right. Milbrath classified the acts of political participation into three categories namely 'Gladiatorial Activities', 'Transitional Activities' and 'Spectator Activities'. In Milbrath's scheme, political participation was seen as a hierarchical activity. He arranged the American population in three groups namely 'gladiator', 'spectator' and 'apathetic'. His classification of activities for convenience is discussed in the following manner:-

- a) Gladiatorial Activities- This category includes the activities which are part of routine of the political parties, such as elections to political post, participation in election to legislature, gathering fund for the party, movements to increase membership, and organization of meetings everywhere to form public opinion in its favour etc.
- b) Transitional Activities- These include activities of the helpers and well wishers of the political parties, such as hearing the lectures of the leaders, donating to the fund of the party and maintaining contact with the leader of the party.
- c) Spectator Activities- This category includes voting, influencing others vote,



participating in political debate, being influenced by political stimuli, wearing badges of the political party and distributing leaflets etc.

However, the analysis of Milbrath throws light upon the nature of the political participation which is always changing, from time to time and place to place. Some later studies on political participation felt the need to amend Milbrath's one dimensional hierarchical model. This was reflected in the important researches by Verba, Nie and J.O.Kim. These researches pointed to a picture of highlighted specialisation in political participation. The research done by Parry, Moyser and Day on participation in Britain showed that among those people who did more than vote four sub groups could be distinguished namely- a) Protestors b) Election campaigners c) People active in community groups and d) People who specialised in individual contacts with officials, politicians or the media. Most legislators are familiar with constituents in this last category. Based on their findings a more elaborate and sophisticated classification of political participation was presented. The participants were classified into six classes namely-

- a) Totally Passive
- b) Voter whose only activity is to vote in elections
- c) Localist whose activities are limited within the boundaries of local level politics
- d) Parochial who is interested only in those activities that fulfil his/her personal needs
- e) Campaigner whose involvement in politics centres around some particular political issues and problems and
- f) Total Activist who takes an active part in the political process as a whole. These different types of political participation can be placed at different points along a continuum whose one end starts with total passivity and at the other lies the total activist.

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## **17.5 Types of Non Political Participation**

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If political participation happens to be one of the crucial yardstick to measure the success of democracy then simultaneously it has to be noted that there are cases of non participation as well. It is essential to identify the major types of non participation since this will enable us to analyse the reasons behind the passivity with regard to

political actions by the citizens. Broadly, there are four main types of non participation which are –

- a) **Apathy** – Social scientists have shown interest in certain forms of political non participation of which apathy is one of them. Apathy is a type of political passivity which provides support for the regime, but enables the individual to avoid the politicization of his/her whole being. There are different causes of apathy. In a democracy one usually comes across two types of apathetics. There are those who fail to participate because of a lack of information about and interest in the political world which results from their political indifference and incapacity and also from a lack of the opportunity to participate. This kind of political apathy which is far from deliberate and is usually found among the uneducated, the inarticulate, the parochial, the isolated and also among those whose very roles operate only on the basis of a kind of political passivity. At the same time, there is another group of persons who are highly aware of the political changes and they are either frustrated and helpless or highly satisfied and wills no change whatsoever, to bring in the polity, and therefore, deliberately keeps themselves away from the political activities. There may be very many reasons why an individual deliberately shuns political involvement. In the first, it may be due to the fact that political involvement to an individual may appear to be far less rewarding than other kinds of human activity. One may tend to derive higher psychological satisfaction and greater amount of concrete material benefits from one's preoccupation with family, friends and the like than from political involvement. The extent to which political participation will thus, be lowly valued by an individual, however, depends on two factors- psychological and social. An individual's mental make up may be such that he has a greater interest in his primordial, biological and psychological needs than in the distant and vague results likely to flow from political involvement. Secondly, an individual is likely to be disinterested in his/her political participation, if he/she somehow goes by the belief that it really makes no sense in as far as it will never be able to change the existing state of things. Thirdly, political apathy may also result from the fact that an individual is too satisfied with the efficiency and efficacy of the political system of which he/she belongs to. He/she may have so great a confidence in the excellence of a political system that he/she may be led to the belief that the system will go on functioning smoothly and efficiently no matter whether he/she is politically involved or not. This explains why voting turn outs raise high in times of economic crisis in USA in 1936.

Apathy leads to the decline of political vitality and vigilance. This might ultimately result in depriving this particular section of the society who need most to be represented for exercising the right to influence the decision making process. Sometimes political apathy becomes an ideology which is detrimental to the interests of the nation. Infact, political apathy makes politics confused, complicated and contradictory, and political communication becomes mere propoganda. Personal reasons may also account for apathy. It develops certain degree of mental laziness to a phobia toward a serious thought of political decay. Whatever be the cause or causes, political apathy remains a crucial problem.

- b) **Cynicism** – Cynicism etymologically means complete distrust towards others. It is a psychological disorder where good deeds of others are always taken into suspicion and doubt. Such a person grows a cell around him/her and becomes isolated. They also become pessimistic and regard political leaders as actors of oppression. Political cynicism, if increases qualitatively or quantitatively, it weakens the foundation of democracy. Cynical person regards voting as a futile effort to control the government. They are fed up with the existing political system and at the same time they are not optimistic towards bringing about change. Thus, cynicism leads to lack of legitimacy and popular support for the political system.
- c) **Alienation-** Alienation as a concept was elucidated by Satre and Marx which is a stage of dilemma. The inherent conflict and the loss of judgement lead to it. In a political system such a condition of a man/woman divorces him/her from the day to day activities. A person purposefully segregates themselves from the polity.
- d) **Anomie-** This is another psychological phenomenon which refers to a sense of rootlessness, loss of values and lack of direction among individuals. Anomie inhibits political participation because as in the case of apathy it implies a feeling of ineffectiveness or a feeling that authorities do not care about the common people. However, there is also a difference between the two. While the former is passive in nature, latter involves fear, panic, violence and destruction. The implication of anomic attitude is reflected at the individual level in the form of suicide, as riot at the group level and as terrorism at the country and cross country level. This is a very serious problem as it involves devaluation of norms and goals.

This suggests that participation by the people in the political process is regarded as one of the essential preconditions for the success of democracy. Thus, in a democracy, non participation may be viewed as a disease or a crisis.

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## 17.6 Voting behaviour

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One of the major concern of political participation in a representative democracy is the voting behaviour. It is in a true democracy, that, election provides opportunities for the most overt forms of political participation. Broadly speaking, the factors responsible for voting behaviour can be classified into three categories namely socio-economic, psychological and political.

### a) Socio-economic

The socio-economic factors are governed by the following:-

- 1) Caste- The study of electoral behaviour suggests that the main force behind voting in India is caste. Rajani Kothari had a firm belief that voting is an extended family affair usually guided by the choice of the head of the family or caste affiliation. He further added that caste and community are two easily identified social clusters which are keenly and deliberately exploited by the politicians for the electoral gain. The most glaring example in India can be Mandal and Kamandal Politics.
- 2) Class- Class cleavage in the society though being a sociological concept has a lasting political impact. Karl Marx rightly claims that there are only two class in the society- haves and have-nots. The economically dominant class according to him, remains more authoritative than the middle income group. Politicians take help from capitalist class in contesting elections, and in return give them certain favours. Class factor remains important in orienting voting behaviour. The role of class in electoral politics has come in for critical review in the work of Geoffrey Evans where it was indicated adequately how class is still relevant as an important explanatory variable in voting behaviour.
- 3) Community- Religious affinity and race can also turn into communal frenzy. The dictates of religious heads or priests in guiding voting behaviour needs to be discouraged. As it happens to be a sensitive issue politicians try to gain optimum result out of it. Be it Ram Janam Bhumi or Babri Masjid or the Khalistan issue religious sentiments are exploited

for vested interests. The influence of religion is more pronounced in the developing countries like that of India where the pace of secularisation is slow and the grip of tradition is strong.

- 4) Region- Geographical proximity also plays a crucial role in influencing the voting pattern. The north south divide in India is a glaring example of opposed political behaviour. The autonomy of the state within a federal structure is a result of regional imbalances and strikingly different political culture. The emergence of regional parties was mainly due to the fact that Congress as a party failed to serve the interests of the nation as a whole. It was alleged to be a party of north India and south Indians as a sharp reaction to it found their own regional parties for promoting their sectional interests.
- 5) Language- Linguistic loyalty often forms the basis for the formation of political parties dedicated to meet the requirement of specific groups. Language affinity is a direct offshoot of regional grievances and is purposefully used by political leaders for seeking or holding power. Unfortunately, Hindi as a language has been a bone of contention between north and south India.
- 6) Money- Food, security and adequate means of livelihood remains the most complicated problem in a larger democracy like that of India. Welfare state functions on the principle of just and human order. India tool, follows its footsteps but the non delivery of the services at the grassroot level aggravates the problem.

#### **b) Socio-Psychological factors**

The voting behaviour reveals the fact that human psychology also has an impact on exercising of vote. Even in western democracies, personality or sympathy voting cannot be denied. The sudden demise of a political leader pulls sympathy of the masses which are often reflected in the in their voting behaviour. For example, post poll results after the assassination of Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi reveals this truth. Film stars and celebrities find easy to become representatives because of the popular support. Age is also a difficult factor to treat as an independent variable. However, older voters tend to vote for conservative parties. Though there is no final finding regarding gender as a determinant of voting behaviour but Lipset found that

women are more sensitive towards ethical issues and therefore, corruption criminalisation adversely affects their behaviour.

**c) Political factors**

The major political determinants of voting behaviour includes- political orientation, political issues and events, political ideological allegiance, political efficacy and anti incumbency factor. Political variables have not received due attention. What motivates the electorate to become a voter is its sense of political security rather than performance efficacy. Matured political systems demand political orientation of the electorate. Here, the role of the political party becomes highly crucial and responsible. Political parties disseminate political ideas and information and make voters aware of their polling rights. Elections are contested primarily based on issues where there is ideological ambiguity in the party system. Long term continuities in allegiance to particular group or ideologies inspite of the changes in the issues or in the role of different political parties remains stable conditions underlying mandate. For example- older people have a very strong affiliation to Indian National Congress and they are not ready to undermine its importance even with the changing behavioural pattern of the party. People link themselves with the political system and political parties, as they do with caste or community. It has also been found that ideological allegiance varies from area to area. There are many factors responsible for political allegiance. The family orientation, the individual interest or the ideological affiliation work together as man is a product of multiple and dynamic environmental factors. The most analytical and critical voting behaviour is based on evaluating performance of political parties. Political participation is a human activity fundamentally and therefore, cannot be completely free from personal preferences. The analysis of the past elections provides us many examples where voters were influenced by immediate political speeches and normative agendas.

It is true that voting behaviour cannot provide a final explanation of the voting participation. Yet, it cannot be denied that they establish some important links. These links are extremely important since through continuous verification of these links in different historical conditions, one may finally arrive at some reliable propositions and it is in the perspective of these propositions that one can make an attempt of a theoretical analysis of the phenomenon of political participation.

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## 17.7 Political Participation of Women

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Role of women in political participation has been a topic of much discussion in the recent years. The participation of women in electoral process can be defined not only in terms of the equality and freedom with which they share political power with men, but also in terms of the liberty and space provided for women in the democratic framework of electoral politics. The marginalisation of female from electoral participation in India stems not mainly from competition arisen between national and regional parties in terms of seat allotments but also from the patriarchal prejudices that shrouded the political parties and refrain them to be in command even within the organization. In contrast to the poor allotment of seats to women by political parties in the elections and marginalisation within the party structure, female electoral participation as voters has been a notable upsurge in the late 1990's as voter turnout in the last few elections.

The electoral participation of women in India, invites a wide range of opinions and divergent views. On the one hand, some theorists argued that the electoral process in India is fraught with male patriarchy and dominance that act as impediments to women participation. The lack of political voice and poor representation in the Parliament bears the testimony of such claims. On the other hand, there are theorists who dispute this argument and feel that the increased participation of women in electoral competition as voters and sharing of political power at the grassroot level reveal that electoral politics in India is no more gender exclusive but is quite inclusive.

The participation of women has been systematically analysed by Praveen Rai in one of his article published in Economic and Political Weekly (EPW) using a pyramidal electoral participation model stratified at four levels on a quantitative basis. This model suggests the following four strata-

- 1) In the top strata, is female representation in the lower house of the Parliament and in Legislative Assemblies which is the narrowest and most constricted numerically.
- 2) In the second strata, are women as candidate in electoral competition participating as members and functionaries of political parties where their representation in quantative terms is more than that at the top layer.
- 3) In the third strata, as active campaigners for political parties where female participation is much larger in numbers than that in the second strata.

- 4) In the bottom strata, with the widest base of women in numerical terms as single time voters.

The levels of female participation at the top tiers of electoral competition are fairly low as compared to Indian men and the only level of electoral participation where they have achieved some degree of parity are as voters in elections. Thus, women's participation in electoral competition has been restricted to being periodic electors, something that is not only promoted and encouraged by the political parties and society but also by the state organs in India.

Before analysing the low level of representation of women in the lower house of the Parliament, it is worthwhile to compare their positions with other countries of South Asia in recent years. The representation of women in the lower house of Afghanistan Parliament is the highest i.e. 27% as witnessed at the first parliamentary election after the downfall of the first Taliban rule. Apart from Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan are the two countries in the region where women representatives occupy more than 20% seats in the lower house of the Parliament. The reasons for other countries being ranked higher than India is mainly due to reservation of seats for women in the lower house of the Parliament. Thus, India (10.86) and Srilanka (4.89) are two countries in the region where representation in the Parliament is below the world average of 20% representation of women.

The main factors as identified by P.Rai includes the following-

Firstly, socio-economic forces inherited from nationalist movement, current social policies and the gendered nature of citizenship in hampering women's political participation in government structures, elections and community organisations.

Secondly, lack of reservation of seats for women in the Parliament and state legislatures.

Thirdly, lack of national consensus and willingness among political parties to give more tickets to women in elections

Fourthly, perpetuation of a patriarchal political structure together with caste, class and gender subordination acting as strong deterrents to women contesting elections.

Finally, lack of awareness and knowledge of electoral politics combined with a lack of support from the family and political parties in resources severely affects women's chances to contest and win elections.

However, despite the gloomy reality, the silver lining over women's participation in electoral politics in India, is the participatory upsurge witnessed among women as voters since 1990s. Women's participation has also noticeably increased in campaign



activities during the election. It is obvious to address the key barriers restricting women's participation in politics on a priority basis and simultaneously efforts on part of the government and the civil society to motivate women for their active participation in formal politics is needed to be ensured. An increased participation of women in active politics will not only ensure equality with men but will further enhance the scope to address larger serious issues concerning women which were otherwise mostly neglected.

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## 17.8 Conclusion

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Electoral politics in liberal democracies are going through revolutionary changes with the ushering in of new techniques of electoral propaganda and marketing strategy. If the new politics based on new social movements have tended to activate the civil society in influencing the elections then the role of technology particularly internet and social media have engulfed the country with cyber campaigns. The increasing use of opinion polls and development of several research groups meant for elections (like MARG, IMRB etc.) have helped political parties and candidates to develop a marketing strategy. The intense usage of such tools not only gave birth to media hype centering on elections but has a significant influence upon the electoral behaviour of the voters.

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## 17.9 Summing Up

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- Political participation as one of the basic concept in Political Science has been defined by scholars in different ways.
- In a very general sense, political participation essentially means taking part in politics. However, getting involved in politics may imply participation at varying degrees and at different levels.
- Political scientists like Robert E. Lane have identified a number of socio-economic and political factors which influence the degree and rate of political participation.
- Political participation can broadly be classified into two types namely- participation in the electoral process and participation through other modes.
- There are cases of non participation in democracy too, such as apathy, cynicism, alienation and anomie.
- One of the major concerns of political participation in a representative democracy

is the voting behaviour. Factors responsible for voting behaviour can be classified into three categories namely socio-economic, psychological and political.

- The marginalisation of female from electoral participation in India stems not mainly from competition arisen between national and regional parties in terms of seat allotments but also from the patriarchal prejudices that shrouded the political parties and refrain them to be in command even within the organization.

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## 17.10 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. What is political participation? What are its different types?
2. Identify the major factors influencing political participation.

### Long Questions :

1. What is political non participation? Examine its different types.
2. State the factors influencing the voting behaviour of a country with special reference to India.

### Short Questions :

1. Write a short note on women's participation in Indian politics.
2. Explain Milbrath's classification of political participation.

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## 17.11 Further Reading

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## **Unit-18 □ Representation–Meaning, Theories and Models**

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### **Structure**

#### **18.0 Objective**

#### **18.1 Introduction**

#### **18.2 Idea of Representation**

#### **18.3 Theories of nature of suffrage**

#### **18.4 Theories of Representation**

#### **18.5 Models of Representation**

#### **18.6 Conclusion**

#### **18.7 Summing Up**

#### **18.8 Probable Questions**

#### **18.9 Further Reading**

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### **18.0 Objective**

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The present chapter helps us to analyse

- The meaning of representation
- The different theories relating to suffrage
- Different theories on representation
- A variety of models related to representation

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### **18.1 Introduction**

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Electorate and Representation happens to be one of the most significant areas of discussion with regard to liberal democracies of contemporary world. Democracy implies popular sovereignty and popular sovereignty becomes meaningful only when

electorate exercises their right to vote to constitute a government. So to make democracy effective in practical plane, it is the elections that play the most crucial role. The practice of periodic elections in liberal democracies and in electing representatives to act as a custodian of masses gave rise to the idea of representation. However, the method to ensure representation had given rise to severe controversies amongst scholars. Subsequently, a number of theories in representation have been introduced based on distinct ideological and political assumptions.

Growing political consciousness of the masses led to the belief that governmental actions must conform to the interest of the public. Under the ancient democracies, the citizens of the city states participated in the making of laws and administration of public business. In the large nation states of the later ages, direct popular participation became impossible. Consequently, the practice of electing periodically some representatives, who would work as the trustee of the people, came to be developed. This gave birth to the idea of representation.

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## 18.2 Idea of Representation

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### What is Representation?

If we go by the meaning of the term representation in accordance to the Oxford Advanced Learner, it implies, “the act of presenting someone or something in a particular way”. However, this is a very general meaning of the term. Specifically, in political parlance representation is the process through which influence by the entire citizenry or a part of them is exerted upon governmental action, with their express approval, exercised on their behalf by a smaller number among them with binding effect upon those represented.

Historically, the idea of representation was often used synonymously with responsible government. But here, a clear line of distinction is required to be drawn between the two. Usually, the purpose of representation is the attainment of responsibility. But there may be governments, which in spite of the fact that they are characterised by representative assemblies, are not responsible in their manners of operation. The fascist government of Italy and the government in Hitler’s Germany had elections yet, they were not responsible governments. Contrarily, a government may be responsible without being representative. For instance, the ancient democracies operating through direct popular vote did not have any system of representations. In a democracy, however, representation is a method of securing responsible government.

Again, representation is often referred to mean delegating authority to somebody and thereby, surrender their right of judgement of policy. However, modern representation is not merely another name for delegation. Representation implies both direction and control. Infact, delegation requires the consent of the governed, whereas representation requires the fulfilment of their will. The purpose of representation is as much to choose representatives as to exercise control over the direction of governmental policy.

The principles of representation have generated profound and recurring political controversies. With the spread of democracy in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, questions arose largely centering upon the issue who should be represented. Initially, representatives were elected by only male, propertied section of the society. However, later the question was largely been resolved through the widespread acceptance of the principle of political equality in the formal sense by means of universal suffrage. Women were enfranchised in Switzerland in 1971, and racial criterion for voting was swept away in South Africa in 1994. But equating representation merely with elections and voting makes the approach of representation too simplistic, since then it tends to ignore a more difficult question as how one person can represent the interests of others and what it is that he/she represents. Furthermore, the transformation of the older social unity based on territory into diverse specialised interests has created a problem in the theory of representation. It is often argued, as how can diverse individual opinions and group interests be represented. A partial solution to this problem can be found in the political parties. Insofar as the parties cut across local and personal prejudices, sectional and occupational differences, they serve to integrate the diverse forces. Still, the representation of the multifarious interests through the political parties is not quite satisfactory. Infact, a representation cannot be expected to represent all the interests in the constituency. That is why, several methods of representations have been suggested to resolve the problems arising out of it.

### **Nature of Representation**

History throws some light on the nature of representation. As the ancient democracies operated through direct popular participation in public affairs, the problem of representation did not arise at all. However, with the emergence of the kings in the feudal societies of Europe, the custom of calling representatives from the communities developed. This was necessary for the purpose of obtaining their consent to extraordinary taxes or levies. The local representatives presented complaints and petitions, and bargained on grants of money. Hence, they were not true representatives but acting as local powers under special instructions or mandates.

Generally speaking, in the past a representative used to represent the councils of the king which was a close knit community with a distinctive unity of its own. It could well serve the purpose of the constituency. However, only highlighting upon the local interests, the question of national interest seems to have been neglected. Thus, this led to the theory that a representative must rise above petty localism and represent the national interests. In contemporary times, constituencies are strips of territory where various kinds of voters live. Hence, the boundaries of constituencies are frequently readjusted to give representations by populations.

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### **18.3 Theories of nature of suffrage**

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As the question of representation is integrally connected with the voting system, it is worthwhile to note the different theories as propounded surrounding the nature of this political right. These are briefly discussed in the following manner:

#### **The Natural Right Theory**

This theory is actually derived from the theory of social contract which expresses an explanation with regard to the origin of the state. The contract theory assumed a hypothetical state of nature where the people were supposed to be living a free and equal life under the laws of nature. Since the state was created by the people through a contract among themselves, they have a natural right to take part in the government. This right to vote is thus, an abstract right derived from the ancient laws of nature.

#### **The Legal Right Theory**

This theory treats suffrage not as a natural right but as a political right granted by the law of the state. Voting is a public function and the electorate is an organ of government. Hence, the composition and powers of the electorate are determined by law.

#### **The Ethical Theory**

This theory regards the right to vote as a means for the self expression of the individual in political affairs. By allowing the individual to associate itself with the government, suffrage ensures the development of human personality.

#### **The Tribal Theory**

The conception of inclusive citizenship developed among the early Greek, Roman and German led to the theory of suffrage. Within a narrow citizen class,

voting was supposed to be a part of the life of the community. It was necessary attribute of membership of the state. Citizenship as a qualification for voting today is a survival of the tribal theory.

### **The Feudal Theory**

This theory as developed in the latter part of the middle ages, argues, that the right to vote depends on a particular social status. In the past, it was usually associated with the ownership of land. The modern emphasis in some states on property qualification may be said to be a relic of the feudal theory.

Though the feudal theory and the legal theory tend to limit the right to vote by imposing some restrictions but the widest possible extension of suffrage was supported by the tribal theory, the natural rights theory and the ethical theory. However, a controversy arises concerning voting whether to be regarded as a moral duty or a legal obligation. Whatever be the motive behind its practice, it cannot be denied that voting to be made a compulsory act if at all, the will of the electorate is to be ensured.

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## **18.4 Theories of Representation**

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It is difficult to determine representation through a single general theory. The theories of representation evolve mainly over the issue of the role to be played by representation in the process of policy making. Different theories have been propounded by thinkers in analysing the role to be played by representatives and in evaluating it against their control of the entire process. O.P.Gauba has identified the major theories of representation which for our convenience, are discussed in the following manner-

### **Reactionary Theory of Representation**

The chief exponents of this theory are Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Alexander Hamilton (1756-1804). The reactionary theory largely depends on the superior knowledge and wisdom of the politicians who are regarded as the best custodians of public interest. Hobbes defined representation as acting in the name of another who has authorised the action. So when a representative is authorized to act on behalf of the represented, the latter is bound to accept the consequences of this act. When people authorize a sovereign, to act in their behalf, they make him their unlimited representative. This gives rise to absolute sovereignty. This theory is democratic only so long as it accepts the primacy of public interest in policy making.

### **Conservative Theory of Representation**

The chief exponents of this theory are namely Edmund Burke (1729-1797) and James Madison (1751-1836). It is more progressive than the reactionary theory because it grants a measure of public control without encouraging popular participation in the process of government. It is also an elitist theory because it allows people to choose their representatives from an elite group. However, if the representatives fail to satisfy them, they can be replaced by other suitable members of the elite group at the next election. Burke defined the role and duties of a parliamentary representative to put 'great weight' on the wishes of his constituents and accord their opinions high respect. However, he did not want him to receive instructions from his constituents, but to exercise his own judgement.

### **Liberal Theory of Representation**

The chief exponents of this theory are John Locke (1632- 1704) and Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826). This theory banks on the wisdom of the masses and treats their representatives only as their agents or messengers. In its view, representatives of the people are their true representatives. Instead of using their own judgement they must translate the judgements of their constituents into concrete policy proposals. Locke not only wanted that the government should rule with the consent of the people but also argued that no taxes could be imposed on the owners of property. He has no special rights or powers, but only special obligations.

### **Radical Theory of Representation**

Its chief exponents are J.J.Rousseau (1712-78) and the New Left. This theory holds wisdom of the people in highest esteem and goes to the extent of depreciating representative government itself. It holds that wisdom of the people is bound to be diluted through the process of representation. It therefore, exalts direct democracy as the only truly democratic form of government.

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## **18.5 Models of Representation**

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There are contesting models on representation which are based on distinct ideological and political assumptions. These models of representation dictate very different behaviour on the part of representatives. It is often questioned, if the representatives are bound by policies and positions as outlined during election. It is also argued, if it is the responsibility of the representatives to form a public opinion and thereby, determine the public interest. However, here it is further pointed out that



more than one interest actually operates within the same political system. This suggests that no single model sufficient enough to secure a representative government. A. Heywood, has identified four principal models of representation which are advanced for our discussion in the following manner-

### **Trustee Model**

The classic expression of representation as trusteeship is found in Edmund Burke's writings. A trustee is a person who is vested with formal responsibility for another's property or affairs. For Burke, the essence of representation was to serve one's constituents by the exercise of mature judgement and enlightened conscience. In short, representation is a moral duty; those with good fortune to possess education and understanding should act in the interests of those who are less fortunate. This implies that the mass of people do not know their own best interests. A similar view was advanced by J.S. Mill in the form of liberal theory of representation. This was based on the assumption that, although all individuals have a right to be represented, not all political opinions are of equal value. Mill therefore, proposed a system of plural voting in which four or five votes would be allocated to holders of learned diplomas or degrees, two or three to skilled or managerial workers and a single vote to ordinary workers. Trustee representation thus, portrays professional politicians as representatives insofar as they are members of educated elite. It is based on the belief that knowledge and understanding are unequally distributed in society, in the sense that not all citizens know what is best for them.

This model of representation is not beyond criticisms. Firstly, it is often argued that this model is anti democratic. This is so, since if politicians happen to be the best judge of actual conditions and the public is ignorant, poorly educated or deluded then surely it is a mistake to allow the public to elect their representatives in the first place. Secondly, the link between representation and education is also questionable. Finally, as argued by Thomas Paine, that if politicians, are allowed to exercise their own judgement, they will simply use that latitude to pursue their own selfish interests.

### **Delegate Model**

A delegate is a person who is chosen to act for another on the basis of clear guidance or instructions. This model of representation usually supports mechanisms that ensure that politicians are bound as closely as possible to the views of the represented. This includes what Paine referred to as frequent interchange between representatives and their constituents in the form of regular elections. In addition,

radical democrats have advocated the use of initiatives and the right of recall as means of giving the public more control over politicians. Although delegation stops short of direct democracy, its supporters nevertheless usually favour the use of referendums to supplement the representative process. One of the greatest advantages of this model is that it provides broader opportunities for popular participation and serves to check the actions of the professional politicians in securing their self interests.

This model has been criticised on several grounds. In the first place, in ensuring that representatives are bound to the interests of their constituents, it tends to breed narrowness and foster conflict. Secondly, delegation limits the scope for leadership and statesmanship. Politicians are forced to reflect the views of their constituents and are thus, not able to mobilise the people by providing vision and inspiration.

### **Mandate Model**

New theories of representation have emerged viewing the limitations of the Trustee and Delegate models of representation. It is often argued that the above two models were developed before the emergence of modern political parties when representatives were viewed essentially as independent actors. However, in contemporary times candidates are rarely elected on the basis of their individual capacities. Rather they are supported as a member of the political party whose programmes and policies receives attention and are accepted to a certain extent by the majority. The most influential amongst the new theories is the doctrine of the mandate. This is based on the idea that, in winning an election a party gains a popular mandate that authorises it to carry out whatever policies or programmes it outlined during the election campaign. As it is the party, rather than individual politicians, that is, the agency of representation, the mandate model provides a clear justification for party unity and party discipline. As such a politician tends to serve their constituents by remaining loyal to their party and its policies.

The strength of the mandate doctrine is that it takes account of the undoubted practical importance of party labels and party policies. However, it is also subjected to severe criticisms. Firstly, it is based on a highly questionable model of voting behaviour, insofar as it suggests that select parties on the grounds of policies and issues. According to this model, voters are assumed to be rational and well informed which may not be true in all respects. They can also be influenced by a range of irrational factors such as the personalities of the leaders, the images of parties, habitual allegiances and social conditioning. Secondly, even if voters are influenced by policies, it is likely that they will be attracted by certain commitments. A vote for

a party cannot therefore, be taken to be an endorsement of its entire manifesto or any election promise. Thirdly, it limits government policies to those positions and proposals that the party took up during the election, and leaves no scope to adjust policies in the light of changing circumstances. Finally, the doctrine of the mandate can only be applied in the case of majoritarian electoral systems, and it may turn out to be farce, if the winning party fails to gain fifty percent of the popular vote.

### **Resemblance Model**

The last but never the least, model of representation is based on whether the representatives typify or resemble the group they claim to represent. This means a representative government would constitute a microcosm of the larger society, containing members drawn from all groups and sections in society and in numbers that are proportional to the size of the groups in society at large. This model was endorsed by socialist and radical thinkers. They argue that the under representations of groups such as the working class, women and racial minorities at senior levels in key institutions ensures that their interests are marginalised and neglected. This model therefore, suggests that only people who came from a particular group and have shared the experiences of that group can fully identify with its interests.

This model too raises some difficulties which are worth to note. Firstly, this model portrays representation in exclusive or narrow terms believing that only women can represent women and so on. If all representatives simply advance the interests of the groups from which they come, the consequences would be social division and conflict with no one being able to defend the common good. Secondly, a government is said to represent the society but how far it is likely to benefit is questionable particularly in a society in which majority of the population happens to be apathetic to common interests, or ill informed or even poorly educated. Finally, it is often argued, that microcosmic ideal can only be achieved by imposing powerful constraints upon electoral choice and individual freedom. In the name of representation political parties may be forced to select quotas of female or minority candidates. As such, in this system the electorate might have to be classified on the basis of class, gender, caste, race and so on and only be allowed to vote for candidates from their own group.

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## **18.6 Conclusion**

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The long history of democracy suggests that representation as a major principle emerged due to two reasons. Firstly, the ever growing population can be endured

with it and secondly, the rising mistrust of several scholars like Dahl over the capacity and motivation of the majority of individuals to be governed directly.

In contemporary times, representation is found everywhere in social and political milieu. This is more prevalent in the spheres of civil society activities and also in transnational governance. However, such representations are not bound to election. Infact many social and political spheres give input to political decision making and generate representation without electoral authorization.

While examining concepts about representation beyond elections and states, it is often found that the context of representation becomes more meaningful. As argued by Henrike Knappe that representative relationship can be seen as something socially constructed which is difficult to be captured through a single dimensional concept like election. When electoral politics rely on a clear temporal sequences of authorization vide election and held the representatives responsible for their actions, in non electoral politics the authorization and accountability are diverse and often diffused in nature. This becomes true particularly for informal representative relationships like social movements in which represented groups are shaped and sometimes even constructed in the process of representation.

Thus, it can be said that democratic representation is not a mere substitute for direct democracy. With a recent note of change in representation, as socially constructed, the norms of representation depend to a large extent on the definition of representative relationships. This implies that democratic representation may be differently practiced if individuals, groups, interests or the common good is represented.

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## 18.7 Summing Up

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- To make democracy effective in practical plane, it is the elections that play the most crucial role.
- The practice of periodic elections in liberal democracies and in electing representatives to act as a custodian of masses gave rise to the idea of representation.
- Historically, the idea of representation was often used synonymously with responsible government.
- The principles of representation have generated profound and recurring political controversies.

- The question of representation is integrally connected with the voting system so it is worth to note the different theories on suffrage namely—The Natural Right Theory, The Legal Right Theory, the Ethical Theory etc.
- There are several contesting theories of representation which have evolved mainly over the issue of the role to be played by representation in the process of policy making.

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## 18.8 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. What is the nature of representation? In this respect, discuss the different theories on the nature of suffrage.
2. Do you think the idea of representation can ensure a responsible government? Argue your case.

### Long Questions :

1. What is Representation? How it is integrally connected with the voting system?
2. Examine the different models of Representation.

### Short Questions :

1. Define representation in your own words.
2. Write a short note on the Mandate Model of representation.

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## 18.9 Further Reading

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## **Unit-19 □ Functional Representation**

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### **Structure**

- 19.0 Objective**
- 19.1 Introduction**
- 19.2 Elections: Some Paradoxes**
- 19.3 Functions of Elections**
- 19.4 Direct and Indirect Elections**
- 19.5 Methods of voting**
- 19.6 Functional Representation**
- 19.7 Limitations of Functional Representation**
- 19.8 Advantages of Functional Representation**
- 19.9 Minority Representation**
- 19.10 Problems of Minority Representation**
- 19.11 Conclusion**
- 19.12 Summing Up**
- 19.13 Probable Questions**
- 19.14 Further Reading**

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### **19.0 Objective**

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The present chapter helps us to-

- Analyse the paradoxes of elections
- Learn the functions of elections
- Examine the different methods of voting
- Analyse the method of Functional Representation
- Make a critical assessment of Functional Representation
- Explain the method of Minority Representation

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## 19.1 Introduction

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With the rising popularity of the democratic systems in the past years the significance of elections cannot be questioned. Elections provide the public with its clearest formal opportunity to influence the political process, and also help directly or indirectly, to determine who will hold government power. From this perspective, elections are about results. This view is encouraged by media coverage, which with the goal of opinion polls increasingly turns elections into horse races. Nevertheless, politicians are not backward in claiming that elections have a broader and more profound meaning. Elections are, in this sense, seen as nothing less than a visible manifestation of the public interest. However, the term public interest is highly ambiguous since it also raises a question, if at all, any such thing as public interests exists. Generally, public interests tend to refer common or collective interests of all citizens but it is difficult to perceive for an indivisible public interest. This is so, since interests of individuals vary as it is not expected them to act selflessly in accordance with a general or collective will. At best, what electoral results can be accepted as to reveal is the preferences of a majority or a plurality.

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## 19.2 Elections: Some Paradoxes

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Election is one of the necessary conditions to ensure representation but it cannot be claimed to be the sufficient condition.

Firstly, elections are widely used to fill those public offices whose holders have policy making responsibilities yet, there are certain key political institutions which are sometimes treated as exceptions. This applies for instance, to the second chambers of legislature in states like the UK and Canada and also in those states where constitutional monarchs still serve as heads of the state.

Secondly, though restrictions on the right to vote based on factors such as property ownership, education, gender and racial origin have been abandoned in most countries, yet there may be informal restrictions, as in the practice in most US states of leaving electoral registration entirely in the hands of the citizens. This results in non registration and non voting as a widespread phenomenon. On the other hand in Australia, Belgium and Italy, for instance, voting is compulsory.

Thirdly, modern political elections are generally held on the basis of secret ballot. The secret ballot is usually seen as the guarantee of a fair election. However, Heywood observed that it also keeps the dangers of corruption. Infact electoral

fairness need not alone depends on how people vote. It is also affected by the voters' access to reliable and balanced information, the range of choice offered to them, situation in which campaigning took place and finally how scrupulously the vote is counted.

Finally, electoral competition concerns not merely the right of the people to stand for election and the ability of political parties to nominate candidates and campaign legally. There exist also other significant factors that might affect party performance such as the sources of funding and access to the media. In this respect, the nature of the party system may be as crucial to the maintenance of genuine competition as are rules about who can stand and who can vote.

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### **19.3 Functions of Elections**

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Liberal democratic electoral systems has been popularised particularly with the collapse of the communist regime by the disintegration of erstwhile Soviet Union, since 1990s. Being essentially characterised by universal adult suffrage, the secret ballot and electoral competition, it has expedited the advance of democratisation. The conventional view is that elections are a mechanism through which politicians can be called to account and forced to introduce policies that somehow reflect public opinion. This emphasises the bottom up functions of elections, political recruitment, representation, making government, influencing policy and so on. On the other hand, a radical view of elections as developed by theorists like Ginsberg portrays them as a means through which government and political elite can exercise control over their population. This view emphasises top down functions like building legitimacy, shaping public opinion and strengthening elites. This shows, how elections have no single character. Heywood has identified several functions of election which are enumerated below:-

#### **Political Recruitment**

In modern democracies elections serve the principal source of political recruitment. It takes into account the processes through which parties nominate candidates. However, elections are typically not used to fill posts that require specialist knowledge or experience such as those in the civil service or judiciary.

#### **Forming Governments**

Elections only make governments directly in states like USA, France etc. However, in most other parliamentary systems it influence the formation of



governments, most strongly when the electoral systems tends to give a single party a clear parliamentary majority.

### **Providing Representation**

Elections happen to be a means through which demands, when they are fair and competitive, are placed before the government from the masses. However, people do not possess any means to ensure that mandates are carried out effectively apart from their decision not to vote for the same in the next election.

### **Influencing Policy**

Elections restrict the government from pursuing radical and deeply unpopular policies. However, in case of predominance of a single issue in the election campaign then it is said to influence the policy directly. Nonetheless it is also argued that government policy is in any case shaped more by practical dictates such as the state of the economy than it is by electoral considerations.

### **Awareing Voters**

The process of campaigning provides the electorate with an abundance of information, about parties, candidates, policies, the current government's record, the political system and so on. However, this becomes meaningful, if it engages public interest and stimulates debate. At the same time, it may also be noted that the same may likely to have an adverse effect, if the citizens are provided with incomplete and distorted information.

### **Creating Legitimacy**

A valid reason why even an authoritarian regime bother to hold elections lies in the fact that it helps to foster legitimacy by providing justification for a system of rule. This is so, since by encouraging citizens to participate in politics even in the limited form of voting, elections mobilise active consent.

### **Supporting Elites**

Elections can also serve as a means through which elites can control and manipulate the masses. Political discontent and opposition can also be neutralised by elections that channel them in a constitutional direction and allow governments to come and go while the regime itself survives.

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## 19.4 Direct and Indirect Elections

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The electoral functions can be exercised either directly or indirectly. Direct democracy means the rule by the people of a state, town or another political community by means of direct participation in the management of public affairs. Some examples of direct democracy are found in ancient Greek city states, some of ancient Indian Republics etc. This system can operate in an area having a small number of citizens who can periodically meet at one place. However, it is not practicable in larger states of modern times.

In case of indirect election, the electorate chooses a smaller body which in turn elects the final representatives. In India, the bulk of the members of the Council of States are elected indirectly. Modern democracies therefore, have indirect or representative democracy where government is conducted by the representatives of the people, who are elected at regular intervals. Thus, in modern times the term democracy is used as a synonym of representative democracy unless otherwise indicated.

The advocates of direct election regard it as more democratic since the system allows the electorate to take part in constituting the government directly. Also direct election is supposed to promote political education of the electorate and to arouse interest in politics. Against this system, it is argued that when the people exercise the electoral function directly rational voting is made impossible. Indirect election is often suggested as an antidote to the vices of direct election. However, despite its advantages, the system of indirect election has been found incompatible with the spirit of democracy. As the representatives are finally elected not by the whole electoral body, but by a smaller group, the system in most cases helps political corruption. For a smaller group is more easily swayed by special interests. Further, as a means of political education indirect election is supposed to be inferior to direct election. Being deprived of the direct responsibility of electing representatives the primary voters may not take much interest in politics. Finally, it is pointed out that the system of indirect election is reduced to a mere formality by the operation of the party system which serves as the link between the primary voters and the intermediate electors.

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## 19.5 Methods of voting

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Several methods of voting have been adopted by different democratic countries over time. Some are discussed below:

### **Public and Secret Voting**

The method by which voting is exercised may be public or secret. The practice of oral or public voting was prevalent in Prussia, Denmark, Soviet Russia etc. It was however, subsequently abandoned. Eminent writers like Montesquieu and Mill defended public voting. To Montesquieu, it was a means for the education of the common people under the guidance of the enlightened. Though theoretically sound, public voting has been found to be practically defective. This is because, it does not enable its voters to exercise its choice freely and independently the government in powers or powerful individuals or groups could influence the voters and pressurise upon them. Hence, to ensure free and independent voting or secret voting, votes through ballots were introduced and practiced universally.

### **Plural and Weighted Voting**

In contemporary times, the equal weighing of votes is practically universal. But plural or weighted voting also known as differential voting was not lacking in the past. In Belgium for instance, plural suffrage was introduced as early as in 1893. Votes were graduated on the basis of educational, property and professional qualifications. The main argument for plural voting rested on the idea that in the choice of public officials, the opinions of the intelligent few must have a greater weight than the rest. The main objection of plural voting, however, rests on the fact that no suitable standard or criterion is to base political right on wealth which is clearly undemocratic.

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## 19.6 Functional Representation

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There is hardly any single method of representation rather there are a number of competing methods, each citing its own advantages and limitations in a particular way. However, despite their differences in mechanism, there is no doubt that all the major methods of electoral representations arises mostly to overcome the shortcomings

of one or the other methods. Heywood for instance, has argued how the majoritarian systems are thought to be at their weakest when evaluated in terms of their representation of functions. To a greater extent, all majoritarian system distorts the popular preferences in the sense that party representation is not commensurate with electoral strength. This is most glaringly apparent in their unfairness to small parties and parties with evenly distributed geographical support and their over fairness in relation to large parties. For example, in 1997 in the UK the Labour Party gained 63% of the parliamentary seats with 44% of the vote while the Conservatives had won 25% of the seats with 31% of the votes and the Liberal Democrats gained merely 7% of the representation with 17% of the vote. Such biases are not justified in representative terms specially since the third parties are often centrist parties and not the extremist parties of popular image.

Similarly, limitations of territorial representation have prompted to harness the arguments in favour of functional representation. The system of territorial representation is based on the assumption that people residing in the same area share common interests. The advocates of functional representation have contested this thesis and pointed out that not territorial community but interests can be represented. Their contention is that representation should be functional and in this way individuals can be more accurately represented on the basis of occupational or economic interests. Usually it is argued, a constituency comprises diverse economic groups such as traders, farmers, employers, industrial workers etc. Hence, it is not possible for one representative to represent all the views of the constituents. However, such representatives take part in the enactment of laws affecting these diverse interests. It is sure to lead to the making of ineffective laws that have little or no relevance to the choice of effective means.

The advocates of functional representation find in it, a remedy against these defects of territorial representation. Their scheme is to treat every important specialised interests or functions as a unit for representation. The legislature would thus, be composed of the representatives of organised interests and not of the people residing in particular geographical areas. There have always been advocates of the system of functional representation. At the time of the French Revolution it was supported by Mirabeau and Sieyes. Later eminent writers like Duguit, Guild Socialists and the like have proposed different schemes for the representation of interests or functions.

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## **19.7 Limitations of Functional Representation**

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The system of functional representation has been attacked by several eminent writers. The most serious criticisms against it have been discussed in the following manner:

Firstly, it is argued that this system seeks to bolster up the claims of particular interests at the expense of the general national interests. Anxious care is taken under a scheme of functional representation to make provisions for the representations of the various economic and occupational groups but there is no room for a unified central authority epitomising the conceptions of the national interest. However, too much preoccupation with the clear articulation and vindication of function weakens the sense of community of belonging to something that contains but transcends the function.

Secondly, if representation is based on particular functions there would be as many parties as there are functions. Consequently, the present party system, which seeks to patch up group interests and throw up a unified conception of general interest, would cease to function under a system of functional representation.

Thirdly, such system of representation operating through the mechanism of a multiplicity of functional organisations would automatically lead to the same governmental paralysis as taken place under the system of proportional representation.

Fourthly, it can be remarked by way of conclusion that democracy lives by the organisation of centripetal rather than centrifugal forces. This is so, since functional representations seeks to release the disruptive forces in a community and it is inimical to the spirit of democracy.

Finally, the utility of the functional representation has been questioned on the ground that various interests are needed to be represented. However, it is argued that instead of making provisions for the representation of various interests in the legislature, arrangements in recent years are made for their representation through advisory committees attached to particular government departments that deal with the administration of laws affecting some functional groups.

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## **19.8 Advantages of Functional Representation**

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Every dark cloud has a silver lining and so does the method functional representation. It has several advantages which for convenience are discussed below:

Firstly, through this system the legislature is likely to be formed by members

coming from different functional and occupational groups representing diverse organised interests. It is thus, argued that by this mechanism the interests of the members as reflected would be distinct and seeks to be more effective in providing the expertise to policy formulation.

Secondly, it is often argued that a representative of a particular geographical territory cannot take care of the interests of all sections of people living in that territory. As such, functional representation is suggested, so, that representatives can be send to decision making body on the basis of economic and professional interests and exerts its influence in policy framing. So it claims to reflect democracy in the truest sense of the term.

Finally, in most cases it has been found that functional representations have largely been tried under totalitarian systems particularly in pursuance of corporatism. In doing so, it is argued that the class conflict could be easily avoided. In Mussolini's corporative state a non representative fascist or Corporative Chamber was developed on the basis of economic grouping. To facilitate the working of a highly regimented economic system, Nazi Germany organised a system of "estates" representatives of economic interests. The Salazar regime in Portugal has also tried this system.

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## **19.9 Minority Representation**

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Democracy is based on the principle of popular sovereignty which implies that along with the majority, the minorities too have a role to play in the process of legislation. However, democracy in practice thrives for a majority to form an effective government. This imply that to ensure the voice of the minorities in safeguarding their interests, it is essential to have their representation in the legislature.

Nevertheless, it is very difficult to underpin the meaning of a minority in a nation state since the term is used ambiguously to indicate several usages. Sometimes it may stand for a political party like the United Socialist Party or Jana Sangha in India which is a minority party as compared to other national parties like Indian National Congress or Bharatiya Janata Party. Besides such political minorities, there may be racial, linguistic and religious minorities. Thus, from the communal stand point in India the Hindus are in the majority and the Muslims or the Anglo Indians are the minorities.

Various methods have been suggested for securing the representation of minorities, some of which are discussed below:

### **Cumulative Vote System**

This system involves multi member constituencies. The voter has the right to cast as many votes as there are seats in a constituency. But his/her votes may be spread over several candidates or concentrated on one candidate only. Hence, the voter belonging to a minority party may elect their representative by concentrating all their votes on him/her.

### **Limited Vote System**

The constituency under this system are multi member. The voters are allowed to cast a certain number of votes which is less than the number of seats to be filled. By limiting the number of votes of each voter, this system acts as a check on the monopolisation of representation in a constituency by a single political party, and helps the minority to get atleast one seat.

### **Communal Representation**

Special arrangements are sometimes made for the representation of minority communities. There may be separate electorates for separate communities. Under British rule such a system was introduced in India. Thus, voters of each community voted for the candidates of their own community.

A second method of communal representation is the reservation of seats in a joint electorate. Under this system, the voters may cast their votes for the candidates of communities other than their own. But in deciding the result a member of the community having reservation of seats, which gets the highest number of votes among the candidates of that community, will be declared elected despite candidates of other communities might have acquired a larger number of votes.

Under Articles 330 and 332 of the Indian Constitution, there are provisions for the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assemblies of the states.

### **Concurrent Majority**

In the United States, during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a debate ensued between the North and the South on the question of the abolition of slavery. The

South was in favour of continuance of slavery but the North wanted the abolition of slavery to ensure supply of workers for the newly set up industries. The North enjoyed majority in the American Congress, hence, it was most likely to win its case. At this juncture John C. Calhoun (1782-1850) advanced the principle of concurrent majority with a view to safeguard the interests of the South which was in minority. This imply that if, the government of a country takes a decision on the basis of numerical majority, the minority affected by that decision should have the power to veto that decision. So Calhoun proposed to replace the prevalent federal system of the United States by a constitutional structure wherein each of the important economic functional or regional interest interests of the country would have the right to indicate its organ of self expression and concurrence of all these organs would become necessary for every important decision. In America this proposal was never accepted but this principle has invoked on the question of the role of minority in the decision making process.

### **Consociational Democracy**

This system involves an elaborate arrangement to ensure minority representation. It is regarded particularly suitable for the governance of the societies which are deeply divided by religious, ideological, regional, cultural, racial or ethnic differences. It involves four basic principles namely-

- a) Executive power sharing which entails a grand coalition of the representatives of all significant segments.
- b) Greater autonomy of different segments implying that decisions on all issues of common concern should be made jointly by the representatives of all important segments.
- c) Proportionality which made provisions for allocation of political offices, administrative appointments and public funds in proportion to the population of each segment.
- d) Minority veto which is the ultimate weapon for the minority segments to protect their vital interests. A veto may be invoked by the minority for the protection of its position in case of a possibility of being outvoted by the majority.



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## **19.10 Problems of Minority Representation**

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There are certain practical difficulties associated with minority representation.

Firstly, any system of minority representation is sure to multiply the number of parties in the legislature. In such a case, it is likely that no single party is to have the required majority in the legislature to form the government. Consequently, a coalition ministry becomes inevitable which is likely to function on a principle of temporary compromise. Such a coalition government would therefore, be feeble and short lived.

Secondly a strong allegation is made against minority representation by arguing that it seeks to pay premium on anti democratic forces in a country and thus, in future might imperil the operation of democracy.

Thirdly, a system of minority representation deliberately divides people into hostile camps. It encourages the minority to indulge in minority thinking. A minority in viewing from such perspective is likely to have a distorted idea over reality. Consequently, democracy which postulates the existence of a common will, suffers most under the system of minority representation.

Finally, provisions of minority representation would encourage formation of political parties on the basis of narrow sectional interests rather than on the basis of larger national interests representing reconciliation of conflicting group interests.

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## **19.11 Conclusion**

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The shortcoming of the different methods of representation suggests that there can hardly be an universally acceptable system of representation. If critics argue for violation of political equality as one of the major weaknesses of functional representation, as was the case of Hong Kong in the recent past, then there are equally strong arguments against geographical representations as well. Various strategies have been explored ranging from broadening of electoral basis through a balanced bicameral legislature to adequate minority representation, yet none seems to be flawless and highly effective to satisfy all situations and people. No matter how much reforms and suggestions are advanced by scholars, debates and controversies over the right kind or the ideal type of representation would continue to exist and thereby, motivates intellectual intrigues for further research in the arena.

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## 19.12 Summing Up

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- Elections are a visible manifestation of the public interest. Generally, public interests tend to refer common or collective interests of all citizens but it is difficult to perceive for an indivisible public interest.
- The conventional view is that elections are a mechanism through which politicians can be called to account and forced to introduce policies that somehow reflect public opinion.
- Election is one of the necessary conditions to ensure representation but it cannot be claimed to be the sufficient condition.
- The electoral functions can be exercised either directly or indirectly. Direct democracy means the rule of the people by means of direct participation in the management of public affairs. In case of indirect election, the electorate chooses a smaller body which in turn elects the final representatives.
- The advocates of functional representation have pointed out that not territorial community but interests can be represented. Their contention is that representation should be functional and in this way individuals can be more accurately represented on the basis of occupational or economic interests.
- The critics of functional representation argued, that this system seeks to bolster up the claims of particular interests at the expense of the general national interests.
- It is further argued that functional representations seek to release the disruptive forces in a community and it is inimical to the spirit of democracy.
- However, through this system the legislature is likely to be formed by members coming from different functional and occupational groups representing diverse organised interests.
- To ensure the voice of the minorities in safeguarding their interests, it is essential to have their representation in the legislature.
- Various methods have been suggested for securing the representation of minorities like Cumulative Vote System, Limited Vote System, Communal Representation, Concurrent Majority and Consociational Democracy.

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## 19.13 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Examine the different paradoxes of elections and discuss its different functions.
2. How can representation of minorities be ensured?

### Long Questions :

1. Can all kinds of representation be ensured through elections? Argue your case.
2. What is Functional Representation? Evaluate this system with adequate illustrations.

### Short Questions :

1. Discuss three major functions of elections.
2. What is Concurrent Majority system? Where and why was it initiated?
3. Write a short note on Consociational Democracy.

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## 19.14 Further Reading

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1. Heywood A., *Politics*, London, Macmillan Press, 1997.
2. Gauba O.P., *Political Ideas and Ideologies*, Delhi, Macmillan, 2010.

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## **Unit-20 □ Territorial Representation**

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### **Structure**

**20.0 Objective**

**20.1 Introduction**

**20.2 Universal Adult Franchise**

**20.3 Types of Representation**

**20.4 Territorial Representation**

**20.5 Merits and Demerits of Territorial Representation**

**20.6 Safeguards of Territorial Representation**

**20.7 Classification of Representative System**

**20.8 Conclusion**

**20.9 Summing Up**

**20.10 Probable Questions**

**20.11 Further Reading**

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### **20.0 Objective**

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The present unit helps us to analyse-

- The arguments and counter arguments of Universal Adult Franchise
- To identify the different types of representative system
- To have a comprehensive understanding of Territorial Representation
- To locate the different safeguards of Territorial Representation
- To evaluate the different representative system

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## 20.1 Introduction

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Modern democracies function mostly through electoral representations. Elections in recent years turned out to be an essential condition for the sustenance of democracy. As such, elections are often referred as the very heart of democracy. In identifying democracy simply as a political method, it is the elections with which it sets its journey. The mechanisms of elections vary from country to country and its varied forms often give rise to severe controversy amongst scholars. The mechanism to conduct elections thus, assumes significance in analysing the nature of democracy in contemporary times. Through a considerable extension of franchise from a narrow, frequently unequal and indirect system to one which is now virtually universal and equal the history of democracy has traversed towards a more steady and stable evolution. The changes undoubtedly have helped democracy to earn its credibility and this becomes evident with a rising number of democratic countries all across the globe in the past years.

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## 20.2 Universal Adult Franchise

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In a representative democracy elections are usually held on the basis of Universal Adult Franchise. Now, on the question of who to have the voting right has given rise to severe debates. Opinions varied from a group favouring universal suffrage to the other seeking to restrict suffrage. The arguments in favour of universal suffrage are enumerated in the following manner:

Firstly, it is often argued, that, if democracy implies popular sovereignty then suffrage must be universal. The logic behind it is firmly rooted on the ground that popular sovereignty becomes meaningful only when every individual has the right to take part in constituting and conditioning the government.

Secondly, it is also argued that since the laws and policies of the state affect all so all must have the right to vote and practically gets actively involved in shaping of the state policies.

Thirdly, it is often forwarded that a restricted electorate cannot ensure the welfare of the masses, as deprived of suffrage implies deprivation of the benefits of the government.

Finally, Universal Adult Franchise also provides an opportunity to the citizens in expressing their opinions in public affairs. In doing so, the dignity and self respect of the individual is not only enhanced but it also helps in the development of

individual personality. Through their right to vote the citizens constitute the government and thereby, take interest in political questions which help to promote political consciousness.

If the arguments in favour of Universal Adult Franchise are strong then there also existed some counter arguments too which are discussed below:

### **Aristocratic Argument**

Writers like Macaulay, Lecky and Sir Henry Maine considered it unwise and dangerous to extend the franchise to the ignorant masses. Lecky in his *Democracy and Liberty*, denounced the system of universal suffrage as he could not reconcile with the view that progress could be ensured under a government by the ignorant rather than the intelligent. According to Sir Henry Maine, universal suffrage is inimical to scientific progress. Though much of these statements are highly exaggerated as there is no evidence to show that universal suffrage is an obstacle to progress yet these criticisms also reveals certain truths. For instance, if the people are given the right to constitute the government then they should be properly trained up and made fit for the job. In this respect there is inherent truth in Mill's remark when he said that universal education must precede universal enfranchisement.

### **Property Owning and Tax Paying Arguments**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the main qualification for the franchise was the possession of property or the payment of taxes. Until 1832, the parliamentary franchise in England was limited in the countries to freeholders possessing property worth forty shillings a year. In Japan until 1925, there was a taxpaying requirement which led to the disfranchisement of a large portion of the population. The property owning and taxpaying tests are also in operation in some of the American states too.

Insofar as, property qualification was supposed to be a guarantee of education and hence, of political competence can be debated over time but as a general test the ownership of property undoubtedly leads to injustice. For in most cases where multitudes do not possess property due to misfortune or in consequence of rigid economic class divisions in the society the test of property ownership tends to become clearly reactionary. The taxpaying test is however, to some extent justified as the state may legitimately expects something from its members in return for the protection it guarantees to them. Also the operation of the state is made possible by the contribution of its members. Still it may be argued that the function of the tax payment depends on the capacity to pay which in turn is largely determined by the income earning opportunities made available to the citizens. A state which fails to

provide employment for its masses has no justification for its policy of excluding those who cannot pay taxes from the voting right. Property is after all not a bar to political competence.

### **Educational Qualification**

Many writers have favoured educational tests for voting. It is accepted as a measure of electoral ability. Since the essence of democracy is popular judgement, the plea for educational qualifications seems to be logical. There is however, practical difficulty in finding out an objective test for determining political intelligence. Also it is highly doubtful, if political intelligence is a function of formal education. In the field of politics, human behaviour is in most cases as Graham Wallas point out determined by intuitions, passion and desires. It is the consciousness of one rather than intellectual achievement which condition the voter's attitude. Hence, it is not logical to believe that the ignorant masses will not be able to know what to vote for. The literacy test presupposes that the state, as Mill said must ensure adequate educational opportunities for all. But such opportunities hardly exist today. However, an enlightened and intelligent electorate is really an asset to democracy. So what is necessary is that every social vehicle for promoting political knowledge like the press, radio etc, should be properly utilised and the electorate should be made to depend on wise and honest leadership.

### **Sex Qualification**

The political enfranchisement of women is quite a recent phenomenon. The exclusion of women from the suffrage was a general rule even after the democratic movement had led to the enfranchisement of the masses. It was further perpetuated, even after the emergence of the modern states, by the general economic and legal dependence of women. The earlier discrimination against them was gradually removed owing to their increasing employment in different professions and their equal access to educational opportunities. Also, the movement for female suffrage was greatly strengthened by the admirable role women played in the two world wars. Political parties in their zeal for the support of the newly enfranchised did much to emancipate women. Thus, in most of the states, today, women have been given equal political rights with men.

### **Race qualification**

Racial barriers sometimes work against the extension of suffrage. During Hitler's regime the Jews in Germany were not allowed to vote.

**Nationality Qualification**

Modern states grant the right to vote only to their nationals, ie. those who have acquired citizenship by birth or naturalisation. Again, naturalised citizenship does not always carry with it the right to vote.

**Age Qualification**

In no country is the right to vote granted to persons of every age. As a matter of fact, all states exclude the children and restrict the suffrage to those who have attained maturity though the question of maturity of the voters is highly controversial.

**Miscellaneous Qualification**

Most states deny the right to vote to insane persons, the bankrupts and those who have been convicted of great crimes. In fact almost everywhere the residence in the country and in the voting district, and registration as a voter are the most common requirements.

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**20.3 Types of Representation**

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Representative systems in contemporary times can be classified into two alternative systems namely

1. Territorial Representation and
2. Functional Representation

**Territorial Representation**

Territorial Representation is often called geographic representation. The territorial principle of representation is prevalent in most countries having representative governments. According to this principle, the whole country is divided into districts or areas of approximately equal population and a single representative is selected from each district by majority vote. To make the system equitable, it is necessary to redraw the boundaries of constituencies frequently and fairly to keep pace with the growth and variations of the population. Also the task of redrawing the boundaries should be placed in the hands of a non partisan body, as in Great Britain.

**Functional Representation**

Functional Representation implies that the people belonging to different occupations or functions should be allowed to elect their representatives on this very



basis. These representatives should vote on issues relating to their specific function. For instance, those belonging to industry should vote on industrial policy and so on.

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## **20.4 Territorial Representation**

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The Territorial Representation system is apparently based on the assumptions that each constituency has uniform interests. Under territorial or geographic representation the whole country is divided into geographical areas of nearly equal population, which are called constituencies. Voters of each constituency are entitled to elect their representatives or representatives. With a growth of population, boundaries of different constituencies may be required to be redrawn. It is imperative to ensure that any changes in these boundaries do not result in any advantage or disadvantage to any political party. The system is simple and convenient. It enables the electorate to know their representative more closely. However, sometimes it may lead to undue prominence of simple, routine issues relegating the complex, policy issues to the background.

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## **20.5 Merits and Demerits of Territorial Representation**

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### **Merits of Territorial Representation**

The greatest advantage of territorial representation is that it is simple and very easy to be implemented. The voter, under the system, is required simply to cast a vote for one representative in a constituency. Secondly, the limited area of a constituency enables the voter to know his representative intimately. Also, the representative keeps in touch with and becomes responsible to his constituency. Thirdly, owing to the restricted area of each district, the system is economical for the representatives. Finally, as the operation of this system has proved in several countries, it secures a stable majority in the legislature and thus, ensures a strong and stable government.

### **Demerits of Territorial Representation**

The system of Territorial Representation has a tendency to represent the local interests more than the national interests. The representative becomes an agent for securing every advantage for his own locality and takes little care to advance the national interest. Secondly, when this system encourages the election of only the residents of a district, it naturally narrows the list of candidates available to the voter. Consequently, inferior men are often chosen and able men are discouraged from

running for office. Thirdly, since the constituency is small in size, a government can easily influence adequate number of voters and thus, obtain the return of its own candidates. Fourthly, this system produces a peculiar practice of “Gerry mandering”. It means manipulation of the boundaries of constituencies to enable the party in power to capture as many seats as possible. Fifthly, under this system a relative majority is required to win a seat. As such, Finer observed that this may produce injustices in some constituencies and general nationwide misrepresentation. The system, therefore, may lead to the permanent voicelessness of a perpetual minority.

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## **20.6 Safeguards of Territorial Representation**

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Harold Laski has suggested three safeguards to improve the electoral machinery of the system which is discussed below:

Firstly, the electoral choice should not be limited to one of the residents of a district. What is needed in politics is experienced leadership and not parochialism.

Secondly, the candidate elected from a constituency must not be merely a delegate for the representations of the local interests. Nor should he be a servant of the party which is in the majority in the constituency. Finally, in between elections the electors have some means of registering their dissatisfaction if any, either with their elected representative or with the government. For this purpose the limited recall can be accepted as a method of last resort.

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## **20.7 Classification of Representative System**

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The available system of representation can be divided into two broad categories on the basis of how they convert votes into seats. On the one hand, there are majoritarian systems, in which larger parties typically win a higher proportion of seats than the proportion of votes they gain in the election. This increases the chances of a single party gaining a parliamentary majority and being able to govern on its own. A classic example in this case is United Kingdom. On the other hand, there is proportional systems which guarantee an equal or at least more equal relationships between the seats won by a party and the votes gained in the election. In a pure system of proportional representation a party that gains 45% of the votes would be

exactly 45% of the seats. Proportional Representative systems therefore, make single party majority rule less likely, and are commonly associated with multiparty systems and coalition governments.

### **Plurality Systems**

Under plurality system, or simple majority system election may be won by simple majority. If there are only two candidates in the field for one seat, there will be no problems in deciding the winner. But in case of three or more candidates in a single member constituency, situation becomes a bit complicated as the voter can cast vote for one candidate only. It implies that any candidate obtaining the largest number of votes will be declared elected. It is not necessary for him/her to secure absolute majority. That is more than 50% of the total number of valid votes. This practice is widely followed. Again, under the simple majority system the votes scored by different political parties might not correspond to the number of seats won by them in the legislature.

### **Advantages**

Firstly, as there exist a clear link between the representative and the electorates so there is a scope to ensure that duties of the constituencies are met adequately.

Secondly, it provides the electorate a clear choice of potential parties of government.

Thirdly, it makes for a strong and stable government which rarely collapse as a result of disunity and internal friction.

Finally, it helps to keep away extremism since it becomes difficult for small parties to gain seats and credibility.

### **Disadvantage**

Firstly, there is immense wastage of votes in this system since there are people who would be casting votes in favour of the losing candidate and also some voting for the winner over the plurality mark.

Secondly, it has duopolitic tendencies thereby, limiting the electoral choices.

Thirdly, it distorts electoral preferences by under representing small parties.

Finally, it might lead to unaccountable government in the legislature.

### **Majoritarian System**

In a majoritarian system a candidate to win election is required to obtain an absolute majority ie. 50% of the valid votes cast. If the total number of candidates amount to two then there will be no problem. But if, there are more than three contestants in a single member constituency and no candidate wins an absolute majority then the following two methods are adopted for the purpose. They are:

1. Alternative Vote
2. Second Ballot

### **Alternative Vote**

The alternative vote system, also known as the method of preferential voting, does not involve two elections. In an election, the voters are required to make their order of preference for the candidates in a constituency. Thus, a voter is to mark 1 opposite his first choice on the ballot and accordingly 2 and 3 opposite to his second and third alternative preferences. Then if, on the counting of the first preferences of all the voters none of the candidates is found to get an absolute majority, the candidate getting the lower number of votes is dropped out of the contest and the second choices of the voters who voted for him as their first choice are distributed according to their preferences. In the second counting that follows, the first and second choices are totalled to see if any candidate gets an absolute majority. Even then if an absolute majority for someone does not emerge, the process of eliminating candidates from the bottom of the poll continues, till one gets an absolute majority.

### **Advantages**

Firstly, compared to the Plurality system fewer votes are wasted in this system of voting.

Secondly, though in this system winning candidate is required to secure atleast 50% support yet single majority government is not ruled out entirely.

Finally, the outcome cannot be influenced by deals made between candidates.

**Disadvantage**

Firstly, this system is biased in favour of large parties.

Secondly, the outcome may be determined by the preferences exhibited by voters in small numbers which has the potential threat of extremist parties.

Finally, winning candidates may enjoy little first preference support thereby, making the government not stable enough to tackle situations.

**Second Ballot**

The second ballot system involves second or runoff elections immediately after the first. Under this system, the voter is required to vote for one candidate only. If no candidate is able to obtain absolute majority, second ballot is held to decide the winner. This system of voting was prevalent in France and Germany for some time. Under this system constituencies are drawn on a geographical basis on the lines of plurality system. Hence, this may suffer from the same disadvantages as noticed in the case of the plurality system.

**Advantage**

Firstly, the system provides a wide range of choices for the electorates.

Secondly, strong and stable government can be formed out of this system.

Finally, as candidates win elections by a majority support so they are encouraged to make their appeal as broad as possible.

**Disadvantage**

Firstly, it may distort the preferences and is often unfair to the third parties.

Secondly, it may found to be too stressful for the electorates and may even test their patience and interest in politics.

Finally, runoff candidates are encouraged to abandon their principles in search of short term popularity.

**Proportional Representation**

The single member constituency system does not ensure mathematically exact representation of the electorate. Certain small minorities, under this scheme, may go

all together unrepresented and the legislature may not reflect proportional representation of the actual majorities and the minorities. To remedy this defect, political theorists and practical politicians of different shades of opinion have sought to bring forward various arrangements for what is known as proportional representation. There are many variations of these electoral systems. But whatever may be the diverse technicalities, this system involves multimember constituencies instead of single member ones.

### **Advantages**

Firstly, in a society there are various sections with their peculiar problems and opinions. To make the legislature a true mirror of the nation, it is essential that all sections are directly represented. Proportional representation enables due representation of all types of groups, such as ethnic groups, women, different interests and ideologies.

Secondly, under this system, there will not be any necessity for reappointment and redrawing of the boundaries of electoral districts with a rapidly fluctuating relationship of population to districts. Thus, this system will eliminate the incentive to “Gerry mandering.”

### **Disadvantage**

Firstly, the critics of proportional representation argue that it encourages divisive, centrifugal forces, and aggravates sectionalism.

Secondly, the whole logic of democracy is based on the conception of national welfare and a common interest. The idea is that, various sectional interests will work out an ultimate compromise. Proportional representation by widening the area of conflict rather than that of agreement, spells a danger for democracy.

Thirdly, the inevitable consequence of organised group interests and minority thinking is the splintering of political parties. By substituting narrow sectional interests for the national welfare, proportional representation tends to equate a faction with a political party.

Fourthly, the splintering of political parties makes the legislative body filled with numerous groups. No single party possess the independent strength to form a

government. Hence, weak coalition governments are formed. The government lacks the solidarity for effective legislative leadership and for the formulation of a coherent policy.

Fifthly, the vast size of the electoral districts under a system of proportional representation involves a number of difficulties. It renders impossible an intimate connection of the candidate with his constituency. In a single member constituency, the candidates can visit the different sections and try to understand the 'configuration of opinion'. But when a gigantic multimember constituency consists of hundreds and thousands of voters, neither can the candidate make contact with all nor do can voters know him/her well.

Finally, what is more dangerous is that proportional representation tends to widen the gap between the electorate and the government further. The effect is that the electorate fails to understand who should be held responsible for a policy and consequently feels remote from governing.

There are two main schemes for proportional representation namely-

1. Hare System
2. List System

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### **Hare System**

The single transferable vote, called the Hare system, was first suggested in 1857 by an Englishman named Thomas Hare in a pamphlet entitled *The Machinery of Representation*. In a Hare system, large constituencies are set up and the voter has only one effective vote. Under this system, a voter is required to indicate his/her order of preference against the names of different candidates. For each constituency a quota is set which a candidate needs to reach. The quota is determined by dividing the total number of votes cast by one more than the number of seats to be filled and then by adding one to the result.

$$\text{Quota} = \frac{\text{Total Number of Votes}}{\text{Number of seats} + 1} + 1$$

The candidates who reach the quota on the result of the first counting of the ballots was declared elected. His/her 'surplus votes' ie. first preferences over and above the electoral quota are redistributed among those candidates whom these voters have given their next preference, in proportion to the number of second

preferences obtained by each of such candidates. The candidate obtaining the least number of first preferences is eliminated and the next preferences of his/her voters are added to the first preferences of those candidates this process of redistribution from both sides is repeated till the number of candidates securing the electoral quota equals the number of seats available, who are then declared elected. This system has been used in the national elections of Irish Republic and Malta.

### **List System**

This system is widely used in continental European countries. It takes two forms, the bound list and the free list. Under either type, each political party prepares lists containing the names of its candidates in the constituencies. Thus, if from one constituency, six members are to be elected, each political party will make a list containing six names of its own candidates. The voter must vote for the list prepared by a political party. Under this system the voter is required to mark one list according to his/her choice. In case of a bound list the voter is not allowed to express his own preferences for the candidates listed by the party. He/she is simply to follow the order of preference determined by the party. The free list system, however, allows the voter to indicate his/her own preference among his/her party's candidates and in some countries like Switzerland, the voter may even write in additional name. The list system is employed in voting for national elections in Germany, Italy, Israel, Switzerland, Finland etc.

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## **20.8 Conclusion**

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Democracy in contemporary era is passing through a stage of perpetual crisis. This becomes more evident when even in democratic countries underneath a formal democratic institutions, public leaders are found to be engaged in serious democratic abuse which often adversely affects the conviction of integrity attached to the democratic principles. The rising cost of running an election in a hugely populous country has places many of the developing countries in grave economic crisis. The roles of media are further not beyond the range of influences. Infact, private and social media have many of their obligations to be fulfilled which restricts them from their inherent neutrality and often prompts them to embody certain biases. Even individual journalist closer to political actors lose their ability to work independently and with credibility. With political parties prone more towards internal struggles for power and growing deficiencies in intellectual and ideological capacities of political



leaders have made the voters look forward for a more complementary element of participation and accountability required for the system. This calls for a more effective electoral management system that might struggles against the possible adversaries of democracies and ensures a more adequate and systematic representation for the next generation possible voters.

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## 20.9 Summing Up

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- Elections in recent years turned out to be an essential condition for the sustenance of democracy.
- In a representative democracy elections are usually held on the basis of Universal Adult Franchise. Opinions varied from a group favouring universal suffrage to the other seeking to restrict suffrage.
- Representative systems in contemporary times can be classified into two alternative systems namely Territorial Representation and Functional Representation.
- Territorial Representation is often called geographic representation. The territorial principle of representation is prevalent in most countries having representative governments.
- The available system of representation can be divided into two broad categories on the basis of how they convert votes into seats namely majoritarian systems and proportional systems.

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## 20.10 Probable Question

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Explain the majoritarian system.
2. What is the method for minority representation? Examine its advantages and disadvantages.

### Long Questions :

1. Examine the debates with regard to Universal Adult Franchise.

2. What is Territorial Representation? What are its advantages and disadvantages? State its various safeguards.
3. Classify the different methods of representation. State their advantages and disadvantages.

**Short Questions :**

1. Write a short note on Hare system.
2. What are the different safeguards of territorial representation?
3. What is the Second Ballot system?

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## **20.11 Further Reading**

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1. Heywood A., *Politics*, London, Macmillan Press, 1997.
2. Gauba O.P., *Political Ideas and Ideologies*, Delhi, Macmillan India, 2010.