



NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

STUDY MATERIAL

PG : POLITICAL SCIENCE

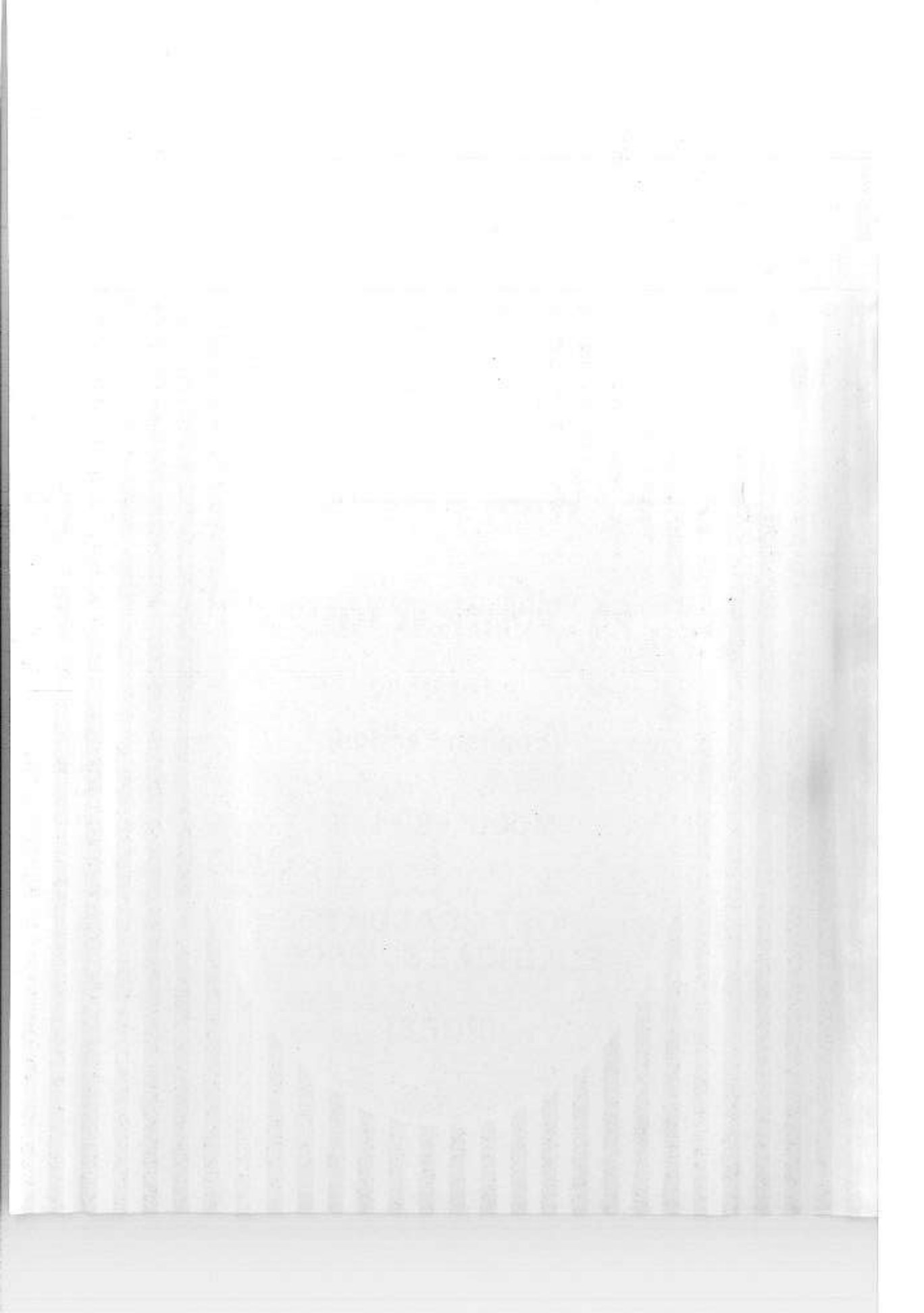
PAPER - IV

(English Version)

MODULES : 1 - 4

**POST GRADUATE
POLITICAL SCIENCE**

(PGPS)



PREFACE

In the curricular structure introduced by this University for students for Post-Graduate degree programme, the opportunity to pursue Post-Graduate course in Subjects introduced by this University is equally available to all learners. Instead of being guided by any presumption about ability level, it would perhaps stand to reason if receptivity of a learner is judged in the course of the learning process. That would be entirely in keeping with the objectives of open education which does not believe in artificial differentiation.

Keeping this in view, study materials of the Post-Graduate level in different subjects are being prepared on the basis of a well laid-out syllabus. The course structure combines the best elements in the approved syllabi of Central and State Universities in respective subjects. It has been so designed as to be upgradable with the addition of new information as well as results of fresh thinking and analysis.

The accepted methodology of distance education has been followed in the preparation of these study materials. Co-operation in every form of experienced scholars is indispensable for a work of this kind. We, therefore, owe an enormous debt of gratitude to everyone whose tireless efforts went into the writing, editing and devising of proper lay-out of the materials. Practically speaking, their role amounts to an involvement in 'invisible teaching'. For whoever makes use of these study materials would virtually derive the benefit of learning under their collective care without each being seen by the other.

The more a learner would seriously pursue these study materials, the easier it will be for him or her to reach out to larger horizons of a subject. Care has also been taken to make the language lucid and presentation attractive so that may be rated as quality self-learning materials. If anything remains still obscure or difficult to follow, arrangements are there to come to terms with them through the counselling sessions regularly available at the network of study centres set up by the University.

Needless to add, a great deal of these efforts are still experimental—in fact, pioneering in certain areas. Naturally, there is every possibility of some lapse or deficiency here and there. However, these do admit of rectification and further improvement in due course. On the whole, therefore, these study materials are expected to evoke wider appreciation the more they receive serious attention of all concerned.

Professor (Dr.) Subha Sankar Sarkar
Vice-Chancellor

PREFACE

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NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

Post Graduate : Political Science (PGPS)

NEW SYLLABUS (w.e.f July, 2015)

Paper – IV : ISSUES IN POLITICAL THEORY

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Professor (Dr.) Debesh Roy

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Post Graduate : Political Science (PGPS)

NEW SYLLABUS (w.e.f. July 2015)

Paper - IV : ISSUES IN POLITICAL THEORY

Advisory Board

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Course Writing

Module I : Introduction to Political Theory
Module II : Theories of Political Theory
Module III : Theories of Political Theory
Module IV : Theories of Political Theory

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Preface

This book is a part of the syllabus for the Post Graduate course in Political Science. It is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the theories of political theory.

Prof. Dr. R. Subramanian Chatterjee

Chairman



NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

Post Graduate : Political Science (PGPS)

NEW SYLLABUS (w.e.f July, 2015)

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Unit : 1 □ Classical Liberalism

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1.01 Introduction

Of all the varieties in political theory, Liberal theory of the state is the oldest theory. In one sense, it is perhaps the most successful theory also. It has wonderful resilience and flexibility. The reason for the success of liberalism is basically two-fold : first, the weakness of the non-liberal or ill-liberal theories of the state, and secondly, the failures of the anti-liberal state systems. The success of the politico-economic system of Liberalism lies in its vitality which has helped this theory to acquire its resilience, respectability and legitimacy over a period of four hundred years. The theory has always kept pace with the changes in social, ethical and political realities in the Western societies. In the wake of significant and critical changes in economy and polity, the liberal theory of the state has made necessary adjustment and adopted a new orientation, and has made itself acceptable to the emerging leadership and the people to a large extent.

Liberalism is the belief in, and commitment to, a set of policies and methods that have freedom for the individual as its common aim. In contemporary usage the

term 'liberalism' refers to a system of thought and practice of state-building that is less specific than a grand philosophical doctrine and more inclusive than party principle of managing the state and society. Liberalism is also too ecumenical and too pluralistic to be called properly an ideology. Contemporary liberalism is the product of politico-economic development and of attitudes and responses widely shared among individuals. In the Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (vol. 9), Liberalism has been described as :

- a valorization of free expression of individual personality ;
- a belief in human ability to make free expression valuable to the people and their leaders ;
- the upholding of those institutions and policies that protect and foster both free expression and confidence in that freedom.

In Latin language the word 'Liber' means 'free' and it came into use as the opposite to 'bonded'. The term 'liberal' and its modern connotation originates from the *Liberales*, a Spanish party that supported for Spain a version of the French Constitution of 1791. Its political goal was to agitate for a state having limited powers. As a coherent system of ideals and practical goals, however, Liberalism as a modern political theory first developed in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thereafter, liberal parties and views, developing independently or derived from the English model, appeared in Europe, in several British colonies and elsewhere in the world. Subsequently it spread to Canada, the United States, and Australia.

1.02 Emergence of Liberal Political Thinking

The genesis of liberal political thinking can be found in the countries of western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, the people's intense desire for a free political life could be first noticed in the city-state of Athens in ancient Greece on the eve of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.) between democratic Athens and authoritarian Sparta. The first mention of liberal outlook was found in ancient Greece in the debates among the Sophists, especially

Protagorus, and later elaborately in the speeches of eminent Athenian statesman Pericles (c. 495-429 B.C.). The emphasis they put was on to think freely and free expression of the open mind. This kind of liberal philosophy was opposed by Greek philosopher Plato (c. 427-347 B.C.) and his eminent disciple Aristotle (c. 384-322 B.C.). Aristotle was silent on the individual's 'rights' in his book *Politics*, although in his treatise on *Ethics*, he lent a vague recognition of natural rights of man.

In the Roman period, liberalism received support from the Roman philosopher Cicero (106-43 B.C.), who has been considered by many as the father of liberalism. But after the Roman emperors accepted Christianity, no respect was shown to the idea of individual freedom. Throughout the medieval period it was the feudal family system and the estate which were recognised as the basic politico-economic institutions.

During the interregnum between the Reformation movement (1517-63) and the French Revolution (1789) a new social class of rich people amassing wealth through trade and commerce emerged in western Europe. These people brought in legal language the important concept of 'contract' replacing the feudal concept of 'status'. In the sixteenth century this new class consisted of bankers, traders, and industrial manufacturers. Advancement of scientific knowledge helped this process of huge social change, thereby facilitating the emergence of the 'bourgeois' class in western Europe. In course of time, the ideas and idioms of political thinking of the bourgeois class came to be christened as 'Liberalism', developing around the basic concept of liberty. The bourgeois class straightway challenged the dominance of the feudal system of production and distribution of the social wealth and demanded their own 'rights' to influence the political decision-making and to participate in the governance process of the emerging bourgeois polity.

The political ideology of Liberalism was not constructed in a day. It evolved in West Europe slowly and through the currents and cross-currents of political, economic and cultural changes. In its evolution different persons and institutions contributed slowly over about two centuries. The important figures of the contributors included Machiavelli (1467-1527), Martin Luther (1483-1546),

Copernicus (1473-1543), Thomas More (1478-1535), John Calvin (1509-1564), Jean Bodin (1530-1596), Francis Bacon (1561-1628), Cardinal Richlieu (1585-1642), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677). Understood, in effect, as the political ideology of the trading and industrializing Western Europe, Liberalism proved its capability of embracing a broad range of rival values and beliefs. Hence Liberalism is portrayed as a 'metaideology'.

Liberalism is the product of the breakdown of feudalism and the growth of a market or capitalist society. Liberalism is closely linked as a cousin brother of capitalism. Initially it certainly reflected the aspirations of a rising bourgeois middle class. At the begining, it extolled *laissez faire*, and condemned all forms of government intervention. In its earliest form, liberalism politically attacked absolutism and feudal privileges. Later it advocated limited government, constitutionalism and representative government.

1.03 Precursors of Liberalism

Liberalism as a coherent political theory found its full and logical statement in John Locke. But two philosophers prepared the ground for the job accomplished by him. These forerunners were Thomas Hobbes and Baruch Spinoza, although neither of the two was fully liberal philosophers. They did not believe in unbounded potentiality of human excellence and process. Both of them believed that ignorance and readiness to obey a political superior were the natural characteristic of human mind and that there was little urge to acquire and enjoy liberty. To them, humans were basically selfish, emotion-driven, greedy, ignorant. Hence Hobbes and Spinoza are considered as only forerunneres of Liberalism.

English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) in his masterpiece *Leviathan* (1651) has argued that the individual has to decide on his own course of action. Individuals agree to form the state by surrendering their powers because they find that the alternative is anarchy. The advantages of government are tangible and they accrue quite tangibly to individuals, in the form of peace, comfort and security of person and property. Hobbes does not indulge in any sentiment or rhetoric. His argument is based on observation of human psychology, a rational

construction of the complex by means of the simple. This is the only ground upon which government can be justified or even exist in reality. He does not use the argument of public good which is a figment of imagination. Individuals are concrete entities who desire to live and enjoy protection for the means of life.

Hobbes's individualism is thoroughly modern and he could clearly note the coming of the modern age of the self-interested bourgeoisie. To him, enlightened self-interest appeared a more applicable remedy for social ills than any form of collective action. As George Sabine has observed, the absolute power of the sovereign was 'really the necessary complement of his individualism'. This theory of individualism was natural to an age when traditional associations and institutions of economic and religious life were breaking down and people preferred to be governed by man-made laws rather than by the theory of divine power of the ruler. These tendencies on the increase of legal power and the recognition of self-interest as the dominant motive in life ultimately prepared the political ground for constructing the basis of classical liberalism.

Like Hobbes, his contemporary Dutch philosopher Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza (1632-1677) presented his ethics in the form of axiomatic propositions which are guaranteed by their simplicity, clarity and self-evidence. The axiomatic propositions form the elements of a rational insight into the fundamental nature of reality. His two treatises *Ethics* and *Political Treatise*, both published posthumously in 1677, were written in rigorous and logical terms to defend the system of natural law and its application in law-making and politics in terms of a body of transcendent values, such as justice, good faith, and fair dealing.

Spinoza in his political theory consistently showed that strong government in the long run must be good government. He defended the right of self-defence of the individual and showed his preference for a democratic state which protects the individual's rights of free speech, free thinking, and to organise freely. Compared to Hobbes, Spinoza came closer to liberal politics.

But neither Hobbes nor Spinoza were full-fledged liberal philosophers. They did not believe in unbounded potentiality of human excellence and progress. Hence they are considered as only the forerunners and not inaugurators, of liberal political philosophy.

1.04 Liberalism : Background and Heritage

Liberal thought and practice have stressed two primary themes : first, dislike for arbitrary authority, complemented by the aim of replacing that authority by other forms of social practice; and secondly, free expression of individual human personality. In the evolution of liberal thought these two themes have not been usually emphasized simultaneously with equal stress. In fact, the early liberals devoted to the job of reconciling these aims, especially with respect to their philosophical and practical implications.

The early liberals started with the assertion of free conscience and the demand for religious tolerance. Among the early liberals were non-conformists in religion, secularists, sceptics and even anti-religion people. Liberalism also stressed the desirability of impersonal social and political controls like rule of law and the market. They usually supported local and group liberties, and the methods of persuasion and consent. They were for abolition of aristocratic privilege, establishment of rule of law founded upon rational principles, and expansion of opportunities open to energetic individuals.

Liberalism possesses a great heritage and is the heir of a rich tradition of religion and ancient liberty, Roman law, medieval constitutionalism, ethnic culture and the concept of citizenship. The great tradition of the Renaissance and the Reformation enriched the ideas of Liberalism. It inherited the individual's right to direct communication with God, which was popularised by the Reformation movement. It rejected the theory of the individual's dependence on the clergy and church hierarchy.

Political and social changes brought in by the Reformation contributed ultimately to the rise of Liberalism. The political decline of the nobility and the rise of new social classes like lawyers, merchants, scholars and scientists meaningfully contributed to the emergence of liberal ideas and new relations between the Lord and the commoner. Many of these political changes entailed taxation, intervention, oppression and suppression, which became the important issues in the later constitutional struggles and liberal protests. The rise of the self-

conscious middle class was, in a sense, the most important factor in the emergence of liberal ideas. The new forms of property relations and modified legal concepts provided both the opportunity and the incentives for individual and group initiative and enterprise.

A rapid and wide diffusion of enlightened attitudes among the socio-economic and political elites as well as among burghers, merchants, country gentry and professional people proved to be of enormous importance to the development of liberalism, particularly in the late seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth centuries.

Liberalism, viewed in historical perspective, was the culmination of several broad social and political trends. Social environment, individual aspiration, and consciousness of capacity combined to produce, finally in the nineteenth century, a widely shared and politically potent liberal ideology.

1.05 Classical Liberalism

Liberalism, both as a doctrine and as a political programme, developed most fully in England between the Glorious (or Bloodless) Revolution (1688) and the Reform Act (1867). The term 'classical liberalism' is ordinarily used with reference to this phase of political movement in England.

England experienced a violent civil war, known as the 'Puritan Revolution', in 1649, when King Charles I was beheaded, and the government passed into the hands of Oliver Cromwell, a military leader, who established the republican set-up called the Commonwealth in 1651. The republican regime lasted for ten years only and monarchy was restored in 1660 when the minor son of Charles I was restored on the English throne as King Charles II. He was succeeded by his brother James II in 1685. The new king was overthrown by the united opposition of the Whigs and Tories in 1688. The Whigs, the emerging commercial class, in co-operation with a section of the Tories, the landed aristocracy, achieved the 'Glorious Revolution' on the issues of religious liberties and toleration, constitutionalism, and political rights of the ruling class. The revolution of 1688,

the first "liberal revolution" in history, consolidated and gave a definite constitutional form to the liberal gains of the seventeenth century. The liberalism recognized and vindicated in 1688-89 was essentially negative in character, protecting groups and individuals from government, especially from the prerogatives of the Crown. It also secured political rather than economic objectives, the most important of which were liberal constitutionalism, the rights of Parliament, rule of law. The Act of Settlement (1689) included recognition of important civil liberties like religious toleration and liberty of the press.

John Locke (1632-1704), the English philosopher who had seen this significant transformation of English politics and also had intimate personal relation with the important leaders, in his book **Second Treatise of Government** (1690), advanced full philosophical support to the 'Glorious Revolution'. Unlike Hobbes, Locke viewed human being as a rational animal, industrious, enterprising, free, individualist, intelligent and peace-loving. His account of social contract and origin of the state reveals the importance he placed on man's right to life, right to liberty, and right to property. He considered these three rights as basic, fundamental and inalienable. Of these rights, he considered the right to property as most important, because without it, the right to life and right to liberty cannot be enjoyed and maintained.

In Locke's thesis one finds three most important elements of Liberalism, viz. (a) individualism and individual freedom ; (b) limited and accountable government based on the consent of the governed ; (c) the individual's right to private property. Although Locke has been hailed as a progressive radical philosopher and a democrat, one important point needs to be noted that Locke's notion of democratic government was different from that of the recent times, because the very idea of universal suffrage was at that time unthinkable. In the late seventeenth-century England, only the property-holders had a political voice and the electorate was extremely limited. However, Locke was a champion of "limited" government, whose authority was doubly limited by Natural Law and also by consent of the governed, i.e the holders of politico-economic power.

The constitutional settlement and civil peace gave enormous impetus to a

second theme of classical liberalism, viz economic liberty. The Scottish liberal economist Adam Smith (1723-1790) built up a theory upon the postulate of laissez-faire, a self-regulating market, unrestrained either by monopoly or political intervention. This group of political economists advocated greatly to strengthen liberalism. They broadened and democratized the values of liberalism, extending them to mercantile, commercial and labouring classes. Adam Smith's simple system of natural liberty was a "system" allowing men to exert their energies for their own benefit and also increasing common benefit.

The English utilitarians and their political allies completed the edifice of classical liberalism. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and James Mill (1773-1836) accepted the market economy and the ideals it served. They accepted the aims, but not the methods of the liberalism of 1689. They applied the concepts of utility and the market to politics and the task of constitutionalism. Arguing from the hedonistic calculus of pain and pleasure and the principle of equality, they advocated the principle of "the greatest good of the greatest number". In politics and law they insisted upon general rules that provide for a maximum of free choice and practical liberty for as many as possible in consonance with general utilitarian maxims.

Bentham and James Mill argued that only education and free speech, inclusive representation and an expanded suffrage, and regular accountability of the government to the governed could provide constitutional security and good government. In order to attain this goal, they wanted politics to be organized on the model of free economy. These utilitarian philosophers provided a philosophical foundation for political liberalism which would unify economic liberalism with a theory of positive political action programme of necessary reforms. Properly speaking, utilitarianism sought to provide, for the first time, a comprehensive statement of liberalism acceptable to the new nineteenth century bourgeois democracy in Britain.

One can thus identify three **traditions of classical liberalism**, viz. constitutionalism, economic liberalism and utilitarianism. Each of these versions of liberalism developed in different historic periods and had different political

appeal to different groups in the English society and practical politics of the day. In the mid-nineteenth century English politics, Liberalism emerged as a distinct ideology of a political party with a broad popular appeal, which the Liberal party could sustain till the end of the First World War. During the 1840s, on different economic issues like the corn law agitation, the Liberal party enjoyed its broadest popular support, including the support of many leading Whigs, Cobden and Bright, utilitarians, and a substantial section of the middle class and working class people. At this point of time, liberalism in England achieved a maximum synthesis of its two competing themes viz. non-interference of the government in social and economic life and extension of suffrage. This alliance probably marked the natural limits of the older liberalism, which occupied the common meeting ground of several varieties of liberal programme and ideology.

Classical Liberalism became a strong issue in political theory so far as the experience of England was concerned, because two vital conditions for such an ideology existed only in England, viz a broad liberal movement and a powerful liberal party. However, in continental Europe there was no broad liberal movement, and in the United States there was no powerful liberal party.

European liberalism remained fragmented and sectarian because of two reasons viz. first, there were frequent civil and religious riots, and secondly, commerce and industry developed slowly. In France and Germany the tradition of authority was too strong and the forces of liberalism were too divided and weak. Consequently, classical liberalism was narrowly based in group support and it developed as liberal creed. One variety of European liberalism was decidedly aristocratic, supporting not only liberty but also the inequitable privileges of localities, corporations, social and religious groups. Charles Louis Montesquieu (1689-1755) is the best example of the political theory of aristocratic liberalism in France, who criticised authoritarianism in Church as well as in government, demanded rule of law and championed the case for liberty. In his magnum opus '*The Spirit of the Laws*' (1748) he pleaded for freedom and culture for the localities and for religious toleration. The Restoration and the July Monarchy in France and the revolt of 1848 in Germany are historic tragedies of this divided

heritage of European liberalism. At a later stage, rationalistic and utilitarian liberalism found expression in the appeal for reform from above. The *philosophes* in France and German liberals such as Goethe and Herder accepted individualism, widened liberty, and a rational code of laws, but they did not associate these objectives with political liberty or popular participation in law-making and governance. For some, the preferred ideal was enlightened despotism and utilitarian standards. The reform of civil and administrative institutions for liberal ends took precedence over the liberal method. The European liberal tradition was divided within itself, as some liberals espoused a despotic method and the others such as Rousseau in France, Fichte in Germany and Mazzini in Italy sought the liberal spirit in a nebulous concept of General Will or in the romantic idea of the sovereign people. Napoleon in France and Bismarck in Germany built much of their political authority upon this division within the liberal ranks. In the later decades of the nineteenth century Europe needed liberalism as a political and doctrinal support of the society, but it was then "too late" for classical liberalism. Meanwhile the society was radically changed and classical liberalism lost its popular attraction, and in the changed political context democracy or republicanism, nationalism and socialism were the popular gospels.

In the **United States** classical liberalism did not exist, as conservatism in the European sense did not exist either. Americans inherited the libertarian precepts of the Puritan Revolution (1649) the Whig Settlement (1689) and Lockean theory of rights to life, liberty and private property. All these ideas figured in the American Revolution (1776), the Constitutional Convention (1787) and in the politics and jurisprudence of the United States. But all these were a part of America's national heritage and the spirit of the laws, and not the self-conscious creed of a party or social class. Liberalism as a political issue did not have a specific role to play. Moreover, American liberalism was mixed with other issues of democracy and equality in the eras of Jefferson and Jackson. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Social Darwinism and Natural Rights jurisprudence were already incorporated into the creed of non-interference by the State in the life of the individual and of the necessity of personal liberty.

1.06 Revision of Classical Liberalism

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), son of James Mill, could liberate himself from the strict discipline and intellectual domination of Bentham and his father only after his father died in 1836. During the next three decades, John Stuart Mill shaped his own intellectual development in response to the changing needs of the time.

It is interesting to note that J. S. Mill's turn-away from narrow utilitarianism began with his reading of the romantic poets, Wordsworth and Coleridge, who emphasized human feeling and intuition rather than mere logic and rational categories of thought. Mill also had read the French political philosopher Alexi de Tocqueville who had pointed out the sociological inadequacies of classical liberalism. Both Edmund Burke and de Tocqueville made apparent to Mill the inadequacies of the strictly rational individualistic perspective of classical liberalism of Bentham and the Benthamites.

In the development of liberalism John Stuart Mill's unique contribution lies in his revision of the underlying assumptions of the classical liberalism. Whereas Tocqueville was interested in critically analyzing American liberal deonocracy, not in debating the validity of the liberal ideology as such, Mill was precisely interested in the philosophical validity of liberalism. Mill in his tract **Utilitarianism** (1859) qualifies the Benthamite utilitarian ethics in a way as to modify it out of existence. He insists on a qualitative as well as quantitative dimension of calculating pleasure and pain.

In his essay **On Liberty** (1859), the classic liberal statement in defence of freedom of expression, Mill argues against governmental interference in the lives of individuals and for individuals being best left to themselves, both socially and economically, largely for pragmatic reasons that the more functions government performs, the greater is the danger of the government becoming all powerful and bureaucracy centralized.

In his book **Considerations on Representative Government** (1861), Mill

develops the idea of guaranteeing intellectual elites a superior role. He proposes plural voting and proportional representation as safeguards in order to check the tyranny of the majority. At the same time, he pleaded for enfranchising the working class in order to accommodate the rising demands of this class in the mid-nineteenth century. Towards the end of his life, he supported the movement for ending the subjugation of women and empowering them in the new democratic polity. Earlier in **Principles of Political Economy** (1848) Mill had expressed his support for more egalitarian distribution of national resources. For his forward-looking attitude, he has been called a "transitional thinker" as the link between classical liberalism and modern liberalism. He has even been called an "aristocratic democrat" for his suggestions to keep the pressure of the mass society in check. He had a fear that unless the intellectual and moral level of the masses could be raised through proper education, liberal democracy would be endangered.

The final break from classical liberalism and utilitarianism came through Thomas Hill Green (1836-1882), an Oxford Professor, and his followers called the Oxford Idealists. Green and his followers freed liberal/ thinkers from a psychological and ethical doctrine that was much too narrow for the kinds of reforms they were advocating. Green nevertheless remained a liberal, as his focal point was the individual, not the state. He wanted the state to play a positive role only insofar as removing the hindrances that prevent individuals from realizing their moral freedom. In Britain, Leonard T. Hobhouse (1864-1929), a prominent figure in the emergence of "social liberalism", attempted to synthesize the liberalism of Mill and Green. He brought in the concepts of distributive justice and social harmony. He accepted the need for justified government intervention in order to ensure some level of well-being for all citizens that is considered an essential condition for a liberal society in early twentieth century. He asserted the moral primacy of individual autonomy and maintained that individual liberty and the social good were complementary to each other. In the United States the key figure in this respect was John Dewey who advocated essentially the same social and political ideals as his British counterpart.

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1.08 Suggested Questions

Short-answer Questions

1. Mention the basic points of liberalism as a political ideology.
2. Briefly discuss the origins of liberal ideology.
3. Write a short note on the precursors of liberal political theory.
4. Indicate the time span of classical liberalism.
5. What are the three most important elements of Lockean liberalism ?
6. Indicate the importance of Bentham's contribution to classical liberalism.
7. Mention the points on which J. S. Mill revised classical liberalism.

8. Briefly summarise the contribution of T. H. Green in revising classical liberalism.
9. Why is L. T. Hobhouse considered an important figure in the revision of classical liberalism ?
10. Why is J. S. Mill called 'a transitional thinker' in the evolution of liberalism ?

Long-answer (essay type) Questions

1. Discuss the genesis of liberal political thinking.
2. Explain the contributions of the precursors of liberalism.
3. Discuss the main features of classical liberalism.
4. Assess the contributions of John Locke to the development of classical liberalism.
5. By whom and on what grounds was classical liberalism revised ? Explain fully.
6. Explain why classical liberalism did not have firm roots in continental Europe and in America.
7. Explain the significance of the final break from classical liberalism.

Unit : 2 □ Liberal Welfarism : John Rawls

Structure

2.01 Introduction

2.02 Welfare State Ideology

2.03 Crisis of Welfare State

2.04 Rawls's Theory of Justice

2.05 Rawlsian Welfare State

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2.01 Introduction

In the late nineteenth century T. H. Green's revisionary liberalism found its systematic exposition in L. T. Hobhouse's restatement of the liberal ideal. Hobhouse supplanted the older conception of natural liberty with the idea of distributive justice and social harmony in order to accommodate the progressive-minded public opinion in England that was not outright socialist in its orientation. He favoured government intervention for ensuring well-being of the people in general on the grounds that government-sponsored welfare measures would contribute to the realization of the liberal value of equality of opportunity. Lloyd George's budget of 1909-10 was not viewed by the intelligent, open-minded people in England as an intrusion into the market and individual freedom. Rather it was welcomed as justified extension of public control for the benefit of the common man. It was clear that even before the First World War the liberal order visualized by John Locke and J. S. Mill had started to lose its popular attraction. During the inter-war period in the late 1920s and early 1930s, in the contest of the severity of the Great Depression, the liberal economists like John Maynard Keynes and William Beveridge recommended the adoption of a middle path

between the traditional capitalist order and the socialist ideals. Liberalism of the 1930s advocated collective means, invoking the state in aid of individuals and disadvantaged groups. It adopted much of the programme of democratic and socialist movements. Yet the liberals continued claim that they retained the same goal of the autonomous individual as the guiding principle of liberalism. The means to that end and proximate ends changed, but the final end remained the same.

The change of strategy and methods is identified with the expansion and modernization of liberalism. It served not only to reduce arbitrary compulsion but also to extend the scope of free choice, equalise the distribution and enrich the liberty enjoyed by individuals. In the mixed regime of liberty, democracy and the administrative state, constitutional rights and the rule of law not only survived but had in some ways grown stronger. They became stronger to the extent that the mixed regime was a representative one, in which the state could not be used as a tool for the purpose of serving any one group or social class but it served and was responsive and accountable to all classes.

No doubt, the post-war liberalism invoked the coercive power of the state. In relation to the state itself men were, in some ways, less free to do with their own as they wished. In the context of the ideology and functioning of the welfare state, it was important that the options open to men would be many. The new relation of state, society and individual afforded alternate ways of suiting means to essential ends. Given an established welfare state, it would be possible that a better marginal choice in distributing resources and energies and opting for one of the several modes of liberty than ever before could be achieved.

2.02 Welfare State Ideology

Following the Keynesian macro-economic prescription, President F. D. Roosevelt's New Deal programme in the USA gradually ushered in an era of full employment, economic prosperity and political stability. The situation marshalled the support of the socialists in Europe and Britain. Enlightened public opinion favoured an activist state and mixed economy rather than the old style free

market. Of course, exceptions were there. Swimming against the general current of public opinion in Britain and western Europe, Friedrich von Hayek (1899-1992), the Austrian political economist, was an eminent exception. In his book **The Road to Serfdom** (1944), he portrayed state intervention and collectivism, even in their moderate form, as inevitably leading to an erosion of liberty. In both Britain and the United States, the book gained enormous acceptability for the supporters of laissez faire and the opponents of Keynesian economics and the welfare state ideology. Hayek's tirade against welfare state directly attacked the famous **Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services** (1942) prepared by William Henry Beveridge (1879-1963). Beveridge proposed for Britain a comprehensive 'cradle to grave' scheme of social insurance covering all citizens irrespective of income. The Report shaped much subsequent legislations in Britain. Beveridge's second report on unemployment (1944) influenced the economic policy strategy of the Labour Government in post-war Britain. By 1944 a government White Paper made full employment the first goal of government's economic policy. The Education Act (1945) provided for universal secondary education. Subsequently, the National Insurance Act (1946) and the National Health Service Act (1946) sought to implement the ideology of welfare state. These measures were followed by the scheme of government-subsidized housing project.

Thus the welfare state was seen as synonymous with 'social security'. Underlying all this was a new conception of the relationship between the state and the individual within a market-based society. This policy was based on an acceptance of the need for extensive state intervention to ensure that its worst effect were mitigated, on the grounds that the causes of miseries for the people were systemic rather than the fault or responsibility of individuals.

A pertinent point while discussing the nature of the welfare state is that there was a general consensus in its favour, barring the opposition coming from thinkers like Hayek, on the need for a welfare state to meet the political and economic needs of the 1940s. But, on scrutiny of the arguments and attitudes of the proponents, it is found that there are solid differences on the philosophy of the

welfare state. The differences are political in nature. The first group including Beveridge himself, can be called "reluctant collectivists". That is, this group reluctantly accepted centralised planning and drawing the blue print of the administration that would be unavoidable if unemployment problem was to be successfully tackled and a decent living standard of the people was to be assured. The second group included the "reformist socialists", who were socialist in their political conviction and preferred to achieve the welfare state through democratic institutions. Hence, they advocated institutional reforms and new kinds of legislations to bring in the necessary politico-economic reforms in order to achieve a planned and egalitarian society. The third group consisted of the small number of supporters of Hayek's view that administering a huge welfare state programmes would need huge investment of public funds and an expanded bureaucracy armed with requisite rules and regulations. Hence, this third group resolutely opposed the collectivist tendency of a welfare state, which would have a tendency to be oppressive, leading to less liberty for the people to make their choices from among the alternative life-styles and values in life.

2.03 Crisis of Welfare State

The growing crisis of the welfare state since the 1970s can be seen as due to the changed economic and social circumstances, disintegration of the post-war consensus, or both of these two factors. Growing economic pressures were making it harder to meet more insistent demands for improved services, especially in education, housing, health and employment sectors. Another reason was increased social needs due to changes in family patterns, increasing number of old people and growing number of unemployed people.

On the other hand, 'welfare state' had been increasingly criticized within a more polarized political culture. The critics from the right argued that by removing responsibility from the individual, the welfare state stifled people's initiative to solve their own problems. Unemployed youth were seen to be more lazy, depending on unemployment dole. Critics from the left agreed in part that the welfare state was often 'oppressive', but attributed this to a failure to attack the root causes of class, gender and ethnic inequalities.

The Labour government in Britain was seen to have made discernible policy shifts by 1974-79 towards retrenchment and 'restructuring' of welfare state. The policy shift responded more to right-wing rather than left-wing critics. After the Conservative electoral victory under Margaret Thatcher's leadership in 1979, this shift occurred in a concerted way. Generally there were a tightening of eligibility rules and shifts to decentralization of managerial responsibility within tighter centralized control of finance. In short, there was a significant shift from the Beveridge Report's assumptions. Most important shift was in economic priorities from maintaining full employment to controlling inflation. There were cuts in income tax rates and a shift to more regressive forms of indirect taxation. By the end of the 1980s the welfare state had been 'restructured' rather than demolished. A new 'welfare pluralist' consensus had emerged with the private, public (state), and voluntary sectors existing side by side. With the Globalization waves in the 1990s came the growing internationalization of the global economy, undermining the autonomy of national governments. Pressure grew to reduce wage and social security costs in order to attract highly mobile investment. Analyzing the evolving welfare state regime throughout the western world, G. Esping-Anderson has identified the emergence of three main types within market societies viz. 'conservative', 'social democratic', and 'liberal' welfare states. The example of the first type is Germany, the second type is Sweden, and the closest to the third type is Britain. In Britain and the United States the shift has been particularly pronounced. Even after the coming into power of the Labour Party in Britain in 1997 and of the Democratic Party in the USA in 1993 the liberal features of the government have not been reversed.

In the 1950s and 1960s the challenge from the communist world (the so called 'second world') threatened liberty and constitutionism directly. In the long run, the danger is always insidious. Liberty is not destroyed, but it shrinks. As John Stuart Mill said, "things left to themselves inevitably decay." The threat to liberty coming from many quarters—totalitarianism, fascism, communism, political corruption—weakens liberalism through neglect and perversion. The importance of liberal temper and liberal principle was underlined magnificently by John Rawls, the most eminent political philosopher in the last quarter of the twentieth

century. The spirit of Liberalism thrives on material prosperity, social peace, and enlightened culture believing in dignity of the individual as an ethical category. The vision and attraction of the welfare state declined in the late 1970s, because the principle of social justice and equity was not adequately appreciated and established. Rawls formulated his grand theory of Justice and proved that the future of Liberalism is not all that gloomy, and that a liberal social order is indispensable for bringing in a just harmony between the two foundation-principles of Liberalism viz. political liberty and social equality.

2.04 Rawls's Theory of Justice

John Rawls (1921-2002) has given new meaning and resonance to the theory of Liberalism by formulating his own theory of justice. His book **A Theory of Justice** (1971) proved to be a watershed publication as it raised serious issues about the future of liberal political theory. He began his philosophical inquiry on how to realise a just social order and political system in the late 1950s when some empiricist scholars had been predicting the demise of political philosophy itself. His theoretical and philosophical thinking helped stimulate a revival of interest in moral theory and political philosophy.

Rawls's inquiry was guided by the question 'what is the most appropriate moral conception of justice for a democratic society'? His search for a philosophical definition of justice was a part of a general investigation into the nature of social justice. His treatment of this investigation dazzled the world of political philosophy till then dominated by utilitarianism, logical positivism, and empiricism. While answering a single ethical question of how to construct a just social order, he referred to the tradition of social contract in liberal political philosophy of Locke, Rousseau and Kant. According to this tradition, laws can be called 'just' when free persons could agree from a position of equal right. That is to say, laws can be called just only if they benefit not simply a majority but everyone, thereby promoting common good.

Rawls countered the utilitarian tradition by noting that it promotes the greatest overall happiness of the majority in society but ignores the individual and

minority welfare. The utilitarian method is to add up the social benefits, subtract the social costs, and implement the alternative that maximizes net benefits. There is also the method of intuition to find out social welfare, but this method lacks systematic philosophical arguments. Rawls used the method of 'social contract' to overcome these intellectual challenges. His preference was to defend a politics that is more explicitly egalitarian than Lockeanism and explicitly more libertarian than Marxism. Rawls also asserted that when intuitional approaches conflict with one another, necessary guidance can be obtained from political theory. His theory of justice is meant to provide a political theory for finding out the principles of justice and a governing framework of a just society.

Method

Rawls adopted the method of 'reflective equilibrium' for breaking the intuitional-utilitarian deadlock. This method of thinking is an intellectual technique which ensures reasonable philosophical conditions applied on **principles** with considered judgments. It is an 'equilibrium' because this method would make it possible to coincide principles with judgment ; and it is 'reflective' because people think over the principles conforming to people's judgment and the premises from which judgment is derived. According to the method of reflective equilibrium, if a practice derived from the principles conflicts with a conviction, then either the principles are to reformulated or the conviction has to be changed. For deciding on a course of action, practical judgment has to be used to weigh a variety of considerations such as firmness and consistency of conviction, the certainty of the principles and of the evidence underlying the practice and so forth. This equilibrium is not necessarily stable and it is liable to be upset by further examination of the conditions on the contractual situation.

Rawls's defence of 'reflective equilibrium' as a method of justification is in line with the tradition of grand theory built up by Plato, Hobbes, and J. S. Mill. By using this method, Rawls seeks to test rival theories and choose the preferred theory.

Assumptions : Rawls makes some assumptions to put forward a logical presentation of his theory of justice. First, he assumes an 'original position' as a

hypothetical rather than an historical condition, which plays a role analogous to the 'state of nature' in the social contract tradition. Rawls further assumes that in the original position persons live in a 'veil of ignorance'. They were intelligent enough to know that they needed a just society, but they were ignorant about their place in society, class position or social status ; nor did they know their natural assets and abilities, intelligence, strength and the like. Rawls assumes the concept of 'veil of ignorance' in order to negate and nullify the influence of genetic endowments, superior talents and characteristics which may tempt the individual to exploit and tailor the principles to his own advantage.

Secondly, Rawls assumes that the parties to the contract are persons who, like 'negotiators', are 'rational agents' and they want to achieve common good in a just society and, at the same time, protect their individual liberty. Thus Rawls in an excellent manner combined the traditions of Locke (individual liberty), Rousseau (common good), and Kant (humans as moral personality). Thus the contract is made to serve the logical purpose of establishing a well-ordered and just society that protects the values of liberal democracy. In this way Rawls seeks to reconcile the liberal ideal of political obligation with a re-distributionalist conception of social justice so that both the individual and the society benefit simultaneously.

Thirdly, Rawls assumes that persons, while entering into a social contract, wanted to achieve the benefits of 'primary social goods', which includes "liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect". These primary social goods are directly distributed by social institutions like powers, rights and liberties.

The parties to the contract wanted to have these primary social goods as much as possible. However, owing to their ignorance about their social location and personal endowments, they were not sure how much of these goods they would have individually. Hence Rawls ensures that the parties to the contract agreed to a principle of distribution which would be 'fair' and eliminate the chance inequalities of real life experience. Hence Rawls finally defines "justice as fairness". This formula makes Rawlsian concept of justice political by nature and not metaphysical.

The principle of just distribution is therefore the outcome of moral deliberations overcoming considerations of personal interests, biases and prejudices.

Rawls presumes that in the original position people were motivated to protect their capacity to "frame, revise and rationally to pursue" a conception of the good. Behind such conception of the good lies the more important principle of the people's freedom to decide upon their own conceptions of the good. Rawls thus builds upon the substantive moral claim that, when thinking about justice, what matters most is people's freedom to make their own choices. In Rawls's philosophical discourse, people are assumed to be "noumenal selves" in Kantian sense. This means that individuals are free, moral, equal, rational beings and hence they are autonomous.

What finally emerges is that the Rawlsian general conception of "justice as fairness" consists of one central idea : "All social values—liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect—are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any, or all, of these values is to everyone's advantage."

Two Principles

This pithy enunciation of justice is not a full theory of justice because it requires further interpretation of justice. Rawls therefore enunciates two principles of justice and two priority rules.

Rawls's **First Principle** states :

"Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others."

This is the liberal core point of Rawlsian justice. It implies that every individual must have an equal right to the most extensive **basic liberty** compatible with similar liberty for others. Such basic liberty includes political liberty like right to vote and eligibility for public office, together with freedom of speech and assembly, liberty of conscience, freedom of thought, right to personal property, freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure (i.e. rule of law). On this point, justice as equal liberty in the light of common good of society, there is a touch of

Rousseauist concept of common good combined with the Kantian concept of autonomy of the individual.

Rawls's **Second Principle** is concerned with fair equality of opportunity for all. This principle has two parts :

(a) The "difference principle" which means "social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantages and, in particular, to the advantage of the least well-off persons." This principle is called 'maximin' rule, that is, maximum benefit to the minimum advantaged people. Rawls uses the term 'maximin' as a shortened expression to describe his "difference principle". His argument is that principles of justice require the establishment of a social minimum strategy which would enable the people in selecting one of the many possible institutional designs of a welfare state. The 'maximin' rule means maximization of incomes and advantages of the least advantaged group.

(b) Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity. That is, people with similar abilities and skills should have similar life chances in a welfare state irrespective of the income class to which they are born. Thus Rawlsian liberalism goes far beyond the classical liberal ideal of careers open to talents. The Second Principle constitutes the socialist core point of Rawls's theory of justice.

Two Priority Rules

These two Principles gain further meaning when they are accompanied by two Priority Rules. The first **Priority Rule** asserts unquestioned priority of liberty over equality of opportunity. Rawls calls it 'lexical' priority to mean irreversible priority as found in lexicon. This priority means liberty can be restricted only for the sake of liberty. More precisely, it means liberty as a liberal principle is non-negotiable; it cannot be sacrificed for, or restricted by, the principle of distribution of social and economic resources.

The **Second Priority** rule asserts priority of fair equality of opportunity over

efficiency in distributing resources under 'maximin' principle. That is to say, the principle of fair equality of opportunity would have lexical priority over the principle of efficient distribution of welfare and that of maximizing the sum of advantages.

2.05 Rawlsian Welfare State

In formulating his theory of justice, Rawls seeks to unite the libertarian ideal of liberalism with the economic egalitarianism into a single theoretical structure. In doing so, he brings back liberalism into the centre of political debates and discussions. He is uncompromising on the primacy of liberty, but he wants that a democratic welfare state endeavours to equalize economic wealth, social status and political power. It seems that Rawls prefers the 'welfare state' system in a constitutional framework of democracy. For him, the welfare state can be defined simply as one in which the government undertakes the responsibility for providing the essential social services, free or at subsidized rates, to all, or at least, to lower-income groups.

Rawls's theory of justice seems to subscribe to a particular kind of liberal democratic state having certain egalitarian features. He wants such a state, apart from maintaining law and order, to achieve distributive justice by putting the highest social value on the requirements of the disadvantaged. His notion of the state is that of a voluntary organization of rational individuals established for achieving general social welfare. Since he wants his preferred state to help the disadvantaged section of society, his political theory can be called the theory of liberal welfarism or the theory of liberal democratic socialism. However, he places special emphasis on structuring basic liberties that cannot be bargained with social-economic gains. His political theory is informed by the ethics of humanism and the concept of Man as a moral personality who needs freedom as much as material goods.

Rawls, like Max Weber, accepts social stratification and hierarchy as *functionally* necessary and therefore inevitable. But he insists on the state to secure 'the most extensive system' of equal basic liberty for all. He is simultaneously

keen to protect the creative individuality through *fair* equality of opportunity. His concept of "justice as fairness" is basically a concept of political culture and not a metaphysical one. His conception of justice as fairness is meant to "serve as a basis of informed and willing political agreement between citizens viewed as free and equal persons". He further insists that disputed moral and religious issues are to be avoided in order to secure agreement. As a philosopher having practical wisdom, he does not consider such issues as unimportant but concedes that there is no way to resolve them politically, because he knows that the only alternative to a principle of toleration is the autocratic use of state power. In his important book **Political Liberalism** (1993), Rawls refers to non-partisan "public reason" and "overlapping consensus" to guide the people in his proposed framework of a liberal state. Here he makes it clear that liberalism can never be a comprehensive moral doctrine insofar as "justice as fairness" has to be a political, not a metaphysical, concept. He finally takes the position that liberty and equality, the two foundational concepts of Liberalism, are supposed to be "freestanding" values implicit in liberal welfarism.

Rawls as the proponent of liberal welfarism by enunciating a theory of justice has been criticized by both liberal philosophers like Robert Nozick and Ronald Dworkin, and non-liberal philosophers like the Marxists and welfare economists as well as the communitarians and the feminists. These criticisms are mostly concerned with some technical issues and some omissions in Rawlsian analysis. But the basic position of Rawls's liberal welfarism in quest of a 'just' social order has found wide acceptance in the liberal democracies in the western world. His use of the conceptions of 'public reason' and 'overlapping consensus' today serves a practical purpose in administering the liberal, democratic, secular social order.

2.06 Bibliography

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2.07 Suggested Questions

Short-answer Questions

1. Describe briefly the background of the emergence of welfare state ideology.
2. Indicate the importance of the Beveridge Report in welfare state ideology.
3. What is the significance of New Deal programme ?
4. Briefly explain the three types of welfare state system in the late twentieth century.
5. Why has Rawls used the social contract tradition in building his theory of justice ?
6. What is the difference between the "state of nature" and the "original position" ?
7. Explain the Rawlsian method of "reflective equilibrium".
8. Write a short note on Rawls's assumptions in building of his theory of justice.
9. Explain Rawls's idea of the primacy of liberty over equality.

10. Give a brief outline of the Rawlsian welfare state.

Long-answer (essay type) Questions

1. Explain the significance of 'original position' and 'veil of ignorance' in making of Rawls's theory of justice.
2. Discuss the historical and theoretical background of Rawls's contribution to Liberalism.
3. Examine the salient points of Rawls's theory of justice.
4. Show how Rawls combined the traditions of Locke, Rousseau and Kant in formulating his theory of justice.
5. Discuss the highlights and importance of Rawls's theory of liberal welfarism.

Unit : 3 □ Libertarianism : Robert Nozick

Structure

- 3.01 Introduction**
- 3.02 Libertarian Theory of Rights**
- 3.03 Entitlement Theory of Justice**
- 3.04 Entitlement Theory of Private Property**
- 3.05 Theory of Minimal State**
- 3.06 Later Developments**
- 3.07 Conclusion**
- 3.08 Bibliography**
- 3.09 Suggested Questions**

3.01 Introduction

Libertarianism, as a political ideology, means the belief that the realm of individual liberty should be maximized. It is usually associated with philosophical attempts to minimize the scope of public authority. In terms of policy, libertarianism has influenced neo-liberalism, an updated and revised version of classical political economy, dedicated to market individualism and minimal statism.

Robert Nozick (1938-2002) is a major rights-based academic philosopher and libertarian thinker in the last quarter of the twentieth century. He was educated at Princeton University (New Jersey), taught at Harvard University (Cambridge, Massachusetts). His first book **Anarchy, State, and Utopia** (1974) is considered a major contribution to contemporary liberal political philosophy. Nozick criticises Rawls on the grounds of libertarian doctrine and provides a powerful defence of the minimal state. He justifies a minimal state as it is inspiring as an ideology and appears to be right in its approach to the problem of individual-state relation.

Extensive powers of the state violate the people's rights and is therefore unjustified. His libertarian views has had a profound influence upon New Right theories and beliefs.

Nozick espouses an individualism that is totally devoid of a sense of solidarity and fellow-feeling. He declares the rights of the individual as absolute. For him, individuals are born with certain entitlements. Therefore, justice will prevail only when individuals have what they are entitled to.

Nozick's entitlement theory of justice provides a powerful philosophical defence of the libertarian position of the minimum state. His libertarianism is an alternate model to Rawls's theory of liberal welfarism. Like Rawls, Nozick rejects utilitarianism on the logic that it ignores the distinction between individuals. He also accepts the Kantian precept of treating individuals as an end and not as means. Yet Nozick criticises Rawlsian egalitarianism.

Neo-liberalism appeared as an important doctrine of political ideology at a time when Nozick came with his first major publication. Neo-liberalism as a conservative variant of liberalism emerged as a reaction against the welfarist model of liberalism. Generally considered as a right-wing doctrine, neo-liberalism gives priority to the protection of individual's rights and liberty. It challenges the premises of liberal welfarism and goes back to John Locke and Adam Smith and supports the anti-statist ideas of Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman. The growing pains of the welfarist strategy in the mid-1970s increased the popularity of neo-liberalism. It was against this background that the sophisticated philosophical arguments of Nozick in his book **Anarchy, State and Utopia** received well-deserved attention of political philosophers towards the end of the twentieth century. His libertarian doctrine was sharply contraposed to the philosophical position of John Rawls and Amartya Sen, who supported state interventions to advance the interests of social welfare programmes primarily on the grounds of ethics. While drawing inspiration from Lockean concepts of rights of the individual, Nozick derived ethical justification from Kant.

3.02 Libertarian Theory of Rights

Nozick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974) is, in some respects, a libertarian reply to John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971). Nozick argues against anarchism and argues that there is a moral justification for restricting the functions of the state. His "minimal state" is nothing else than the 'night-watchman' state of classical liberal political economy. This state is committed only to the protection of the sanctified rights of the individual against murder, assault, battery, fraud, theft, rape and the like. These rights are sometimes called "absolute moral side-constraints". According to Nozick, free individuals join together to form a state only with a desire for protection from one another; that is to say, individuals form a state to protect, not to sacrifice, their rights as individuals. On this point, Nozick disagrees from the anarchists.

Like Rawls, Nozick draws part of his inspiration from philosopher Immanuel Kant. The rights enshrined in Nozick's 'minimal state' are deemed by him as "just" rights, because they are the necessary and sufficient condition to affirm Kant's dictum that no one person ought ever to be dealt with purely as a means to the ends of another. [Cf. Immanuel Kant, *The Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), tr. into English as *The Moral Law* (1956)].

Nozick uses the term "entitlement" to mean what others call "justice". Hence his view on rights of the individual can be called entitlement theory of rights. He holds that a night-watchman state is just, contrary to those who, like Rawls, advocate a more extensive state performing a large number of welfare functions. To Nozick, this is wrong as this view of the state encourages slavery of the individual under the state. For him, there are only absolutely autonomous individuals. Therefore, to impose taxes on some individuals in order to help other individuals would mean violation of the rights of the tax-payers. There is no *quid pro quo* principle in the concept of "tax". According to Nozick, "there is no social entity", there are only discrete individuals. People are autonomous, and being different they remain different. Therefore, there cannot be any set of rights that individuals can claim as their own. Each individual is to enjoy rights, which

he / she is entitled to have. No amount of good accruing to community generally or to other individuals can justify the infringement or over-riding of the rights of the individual. This is Nozick's libertarian theory of rights.

3.03 Entitlement Theory of Justice

Nozick's theory of justice, as explained in his *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, is a good example of the procedural theory of justice. The procedural theory of justice does not make a distinction between production and distribution. It believes that each individual is on his / her own and has entitlements that are individual in character and not dependent on any abstract principle of distribution of goods and services that takes the whole society into account. This point implies that the state would have no authority to interfere in the matter of individual entitlements. In fact, it would be terribly unjust if the state was to do so. Such strongly individualistic theories do not accept that societies have any ends or purposes that need to be collectively strived for. Such a view makes the individual powerful, autonomous, and fully responsible for success and failures he / she may encounter.

Procedural theory of justice is generally based on a close association with functioning of market economy. It is believed that the market would, if not intervened with, make the most efficient use of resources. Any attempt to tamper with this system would be unjust and injurious to everyone. Besides, intervention would have to be based on some agreed-upon principles of desserts or need. Procedural theorists of justice consider that this procedure is not possible to implement, because in a free society there can be no general agreement on what constitutes just desserts. These theorists are concerned about those who cannot do well in the market, and who might even accept the need of intervention to help the weak. They do not accept that this has anything to do with justice.

The distinction that Nozick makes between historical and end-state principles of justice is crucial for understanding the entitlement theory of justice. Nozick argues that the historical principle holds that an individual's past actions determine the desserts he / she would be entitled to. Since actions are different, so would be

the entitlements to desserts. But the end-state principle suggests that there would be a set of goals to which the distribution pattern should conform.

Nozick argues that individual property holdings are just if they are a consequence of fair acquisition or even fair transfer. The idea is that fairness is upheld in a competition if competitors obey the rules and there is no unfair practice of cheating. Nozick allows for rectification if unfair practices have been followed in the acquisition of property. If, under these conditions, some individuals are able to acquire and amass huge amounts of property without taking resort to force or fraud, Nozick is against redistribution of this property, as such an action would be unjust. By arguing in this vein, Nozick ensures that the state would have only a very limited role to play in redistribution. Nozick argues that individual liberty is thus safeguarded.

According to Nozick, no restriction on acquisitions or exchanges is necessary so long these transfers are 'just' in the sense that these processes do not harm or worsen the position of others. Nozick prohibits the appropriation of the total supply of something essential to life. He gives the example, to establish his point, that no one should appropriate the only water hole in the desert and charge what he wills.

By limiting the state's jurisdiction and its role, Nozick hopes to ensure individual autonomy. He believes that this measure or policy would help individuals to take initiative and use their rationality effectively, creating conditions favourable for the protection of individual liberty. Thus Nozick's theory of justice is a fierce defence of individual liberty.

'Justice' is commonly linked with distribution, and it is basically a distributive concept. Nozick uses the concept of 'desserts' to explain his entitlement theory of justice. The concept of 'desserts' (derived from the old French word *deserte*, meaning to deserve) refers to the actions of men and women that result in special treatment either in forms of either rewards or punishments. It is suggested that the rewards or punishments that a man / woman receives, or is subjected to receive, are a consequence of his / her efforts and actions. Nozick is opposed to accept any role of the public authority, including the state, to decide on who should get the

desserts and what would be the amount of desserts. He prefers to rely on the market forces of free competition to decide the issue of distributing desserts.

The critics of Nozick, however, seem to be justified in pointing out that it is very difficult to isolate individual actions and efforts from what goes on in society, and specifically pinpoint in which way the achievements and failures of individuals are dependent on social conditions. The pattern of social living and political circumstances have significant effects in determining the contribution actually made by individuals. Social justice is ultimately a product of social deliberations and culture. The individual qua individual is hardly capable of determining what kind of achievement and what kind of profession deserve what amount of recognition and desserts.

3.04 Entitlement Theory of Private Property

One of the characteristic features of modern political theory is its attempt to shake off the ethical baggage inherited from ancient and medieval doctrines of politics. In the modern age an important task of political authority is not supposed to promote the good and virtuous life of citizens. It values security, particularly economic security, as an important purpose of political life. In course of time, the concern for economic security took the centre-stage in modern political thinking. The major figures of liberal political thinking from Locke onwards has provided justification for a commercial capitalist form of property as against the feudal form of property.

In Locke's theory of property, private appropriation of property is justified. He holds that one's labour is one's own property and that nature's resources become private property only after the enterprising individual mixes his own labour to create some value. He included the individual's right to private property as most important because without property, the individual cannot enjoy his right to 'life and liberty'. He argues that civil society and government originated in order to make property secure.

Locke's natural right theory of property was severely criticized by the

Utilitarian thinkers. To the Utilitarians, the institution of property is important because of its enormous utility, and it needs the support of the legal and political authority of the government.

Karl Marx advocated the abolition of private property as an essential condition for establishing a communist society. Of course, he wanted to abolish only private property used as capital and for exploiting one man by another. The Liberals and the Socialists did not want the abolition of the institution of private property, but they preferred to impose taxes on private property for purposes of redistribution of wealth in society by means of welfare schemes. The most influential of this view was John Rawls in the twentieth century, whose revitalized theory of liberal welfarism claimed to aim at a satisfactory theory of justice.

Nozick straightway challenged the Rawlsian theory of liberal welfarism. He went back to Locke's concept of private property as an important instrument to protect the individual's right to life and liberty. His entitlement theory of private property defended private property as a natural right at par with the other natural rights to life and liberty. Nozick's entitlement theory proffers three principles of justice, viz.

(i) A person who acquires a holding in accordance with the principle of justice in acquisition is entitled to that holding.

(ii) A person who acquires a holding in accordance with the principle of justice in transfer from someone else entitled to that holding, is entitled to that holding.

(iii) No one is entitled to a holding except by application of principles (i) and (ii) as stated above.

For Nozick, both the first two principles impose an historical orientation, rather than the end-state focus of Rawls's theory. Nozick declares that 'whatever arises from a just situation by just steps is itself just.' No two claims to a concrete piece of property are ever both just historically. Claims to abstract rights may conflict precisely because they are abstract, like a right to well-being or meaningful employment.

In order to establish acquisition as the first principle of justice, Nozick returns to the political theory of John Locke, expressed in his **Second Treatise**. Locke holds that property is a natural phenomenon for men, and believes that God gave the world to mankind in common. Each of Locke's men is morally free to take into possession as much of nature as one's labour permits, with three qualifications. First, the natural limit to acquisition of more perishable goods than one can use before they rot is unjust to Locke. Second, individual appropriation of the common entitlement is to the benefit of mankind as a whole. Third, acquisition by each individual is just, provided that enough bounty remains unclaimed in nature to satisfy labour of others. Nozick extends his use of Kant's principle of autonomy to encompass Locke's right of property.

Nozick's entitlement theory of private property has the following components :

- (i) Theory of just acquisition of holding ;
- (ii) Theory of just transfer of holdings ;
- (iii) Theory of rectification.

He, then, maintains that no one is legitimately entitled to a holding except by following these three procedures. The legitimacy of an entitlement, thus, depends on originally just acquisition and subsequently just transfer, except where the holding is a result of rectification of some past unjust acquisition or transfer.

Nozick's argument has been criticized on the ground that it allows the comparison of only two situations—those of no ownership and those with private ownership. G. A. Cohen argues that Nozick does not take into account other alternatives like joint ownership of resources. This alternative, however, does not go against Nozick's ideal of self-ownership of individuals.

3.05 Theory of Minimal State

Like John Stuart Mill, Nozick also is concerned with safeguarding freedom of expression, especially freedom of life style. In order to underline the importance of individual autonomy Nozick asserts that government must not coerce citizens

"for their *own* good or protection". This expression is reminiscent of Mill's injunction that a person's "own good either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant" for state interference. However, Nozick is also worried about the Lockean value of inviolable property right, which Mill considerably modified. Nozick therefore couples with this statement the assertion that the state may not compel people to help others. Perhaps it is doubtful whether Mill would have agreed with this position taken by Nozick. Like Locke, Nozick is a pure individualist.

The chief target of Nozick's attack is John Rawls's welfare state. The attack on Rawlsian social democratic welfare state is of special significance at a time in which established centralized modes of welfare administration have been discredited as corrupt and inefficient. Nozick denies the justice of any redistributive scheme whatsoever, beyond what is required to provide peace, order and security of private property.

Rawls's argument begins not with individual right but with social obligation and permits inequality of wealth and authority "only if they result in compensating benefits for everyone and, in particular, for the least advantaged members of society."

The starting point of Nozick's libertarian argument is a Lockean state of nature. He moves first to private protective associations, thence to ultra-minimal state, and finally to the minimal state. Nozick's ultraminimal state, like minimal state, monopolizes the use of force, but provides protection only to those who purchase its services in the market. Nozick establishes the state entirely on the basis of a demonstration of what the enlightened interest of property-loving individuals requires and which the free market is simply unable to provide, for example, adequate compensation for certain kinds of aggressions. Another reason for his lengthy argument is that he realizes that even a minimal state is to some degree redistributive, in that it requires tax money.

Having justified a minimal state, Nozick goes on to argue that nothing beyond the maintenance of peace and security of persons and property by the state can be justified. Nozick's state turns out to be more minimal than that of Locke, who required the state to be the guardian of public morals. For Nozick, there exists no

public criterion of morality, nor any shared principle of right that might require the slightest redistribution of social resources in the name of redistributive justice.

Rawls bases his conception of rational behaviour in the "original position", from which he derives his welfare state, on the Kantian conception of universal Right : It is a procedural interpretation of Kant's conception of autonomy and the categorical imperative. But Nozick has no concept of universal Right which serves as a principle of community, of sharing among individuals. His world is populated by *absolutely* autonomous individuals, who share nothing by nature or by right but their individuality. In a society so ordered, any redistribution will be the result either of the "invisible hand" of impersonal market forces or of free gifts by individuals. Coerced redistribution is illegitimate in Nozick's minimal night-watchman state.

Nozick himself raises the point that the idea, or ideal, of the minimal state may not thrill the heart or inspire people to struggle or sacrifice. Here he diverges from the Lockean frame of reference, for Locke was quite unconcerned with utopian lustre. The people in the Lockean state were interested in the security of persons and properties, and nothing more. J. S. Mill, by contrast, was chiefly concerned with the promotion of the "higher pleasures", and hence with life-styles, and with cultural change and development. In the last chapter of his book entitled *A Framework for Utopia* (1974), Nozick reveals his clear affinity with J. S. Mill in his shared concern for these values.

A utopia is a world that human beings creatively imagine, in which the ideal life they envisage can be led to the fullest degree. Nozick assumes that human utopias will be multiform and infinite in number, humans have different conceptions of the good society and the good life. The institutional diversity necessary for realizing efficient protection of property reveals Nozick's concern for freedom in working out of diverse life-styles. Nozick imagines that in pursuit of the private conceptions of good life, each individual seeks like-minded persons in the open market of associations. The market then functions like an "invisible hand", as in Adam Smith's model of competitive enterprise, to produce, over a period, an optimal clustering of dynamically stable groups. The advantages of this device

operating within the parameters of a minimal state, Nozick thinks, are that nearly every utopian will find it acceptable, and that all utopian conceptions will be realized without guaranteeing the triumph of any utopia.

Nozick's minimal state ideology is attractive to neo-liberal politics, but it goes beyond the concerns of neo-liberalism. The basic logic of Nozick is that individual rights and freedoms are like Kant's categorical imperatives, that is, universally binding moral principles, which cannot be restricted by an institution. Secondly, rights are intrinsically basic to human personality, therefore they can on no account be compromised. It is in this broad perspective that Nozick builds up his theory of the minimal state and creative individual. In his theory of justice, he took the stand that distributive justice should not be dictated or imposed by the state, it should be determined by the individual.

3.06 Later Developments

After his first major book **Anarchy, State and Utopia** (1974) had made him famous as the anti-welfarist political thinker and he had exercised substantive influence on the ideology of neo-liberalism, Nozick, however, turned away from political philosophy following publication of his first book towards metaphysics, epistemology, and the theory of rationality. In his book **Philosophical Explanations** (1981), followed by the book **The Nature of Rationality** (1993), he did register a disagreement with the theory set out by him in 1974. **The Examined Life : Philosophical Meditations** (1989) was specifically concerned with the right to inherit wealth. He also sought in his later work to develop further the philosophical foundations for his belief in individual rights. Some critics argue that his philosophical foundations were lacking in his original theory of entitlement.

3.07 Conclusion

Nozick is undoubtedly the most important libertarian philosopher to have developed a critique of the liberal welfarism. He nevertheless rejects anarchist beliefs on the grounds that competition between private protection agencies will inevitably lead to the establishment of some form of minimal state.

There are two distinct traditions of libertarianism in political philosophy. The first focuses on the idea of individual rights, and the second on *laissez-faire* economic doctrines. The rights school of libertarianism generally stresses that the individual is the owner of his / her person and that people have an absolute entitlement to the property that their labour produces. The economic *laissez-faire* school, on the other hand, emphasizes the self-regulating nature of the market mechanism and portrays government intervention as unnecessary and counter-productive. The first tradition is best represented in modern times by Robert Nozick. Both the schools reject government's attempts to redistribute wealth and deliver social justice.

Although historically libertarianism claims its link with classical liberalism, it is essentially different in character from liberalism. In its classical and neo-classical form, liberalism does not give priority to liberty over public order. By contrast, libertarianism in modern times exhibits the hostility to the state as its defining feature. 'New Right' thinking within the school of Conservatism contains an unmistakable libertarian element.

Nozick, confronting Rawlsian welfarism, rejects any form of state-sponsored redistributive justice. Nozick's libertarianism stresses 'rights' of the individual but ignores responsibilities of the individual towards society. It values individual efforts and ability but fails to take account of the extent to which these are the product of the total social environment.

Moreover, Nozick does not take into account the evolution of human society. He takes John Locke as the starting points of his analysis, and has totally ignored the views of the Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle on the origins of the state.

Most importantly, Nozick has failed to answer why the individual's right to property and liberty should not be limited in the interest of the whole society.

Lastly, Nozick's theory of the minimal state in practice, is sure to be a failure on the grounds that Nozick has no theory of taxation, and he neglects to suggest how the minimal state would meet its minimum expenditure.

3.08 Bibliography

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3.09 Suggested Questions

Short-answer Questions

1. Write a brief note on the concept of neo-liberalism.
2. Explain briefly libertarianism as a political ideology.
3. Point out the extent of indebtedness of Nozick to Kantian philosophy.

4. To what extent does Nozick draw inspiration from classical liberalism ?
5. What does Nozick mean by 'entitlement' ?
6. Mention the three principles of justice proffered by Nozick's entitlement theory.
7. What are the principal components of Nozick's entitlement theory of private property ?
8. What does Nozick mean by 'ultra-minimal' state ?

Long-answer (essay type) Questions

1. Explain the philosophical and political background of the emergence of Nozick's Libertarianism.
2. Discuss Nozick's libertarian theory of rights.
3. Examine Nozick's entitlement theory of justice.
4. Analyse Nozick's theory of private property.
5. Explain and evaluate Nozick's theory of 'minimal' state.

Unit : 4 □ Communitarianism

Structure

4.01 Introduction

4.02 Crisis in Liberalism and Western Liberal Society

4.03 Critique of Rawls's Neo-Kantian Liberalism

4.04 Communitarian Critique of Rawlsian Liberalism

4.05 Leading Figures of Communitarianism (MacIntyre, Sandel, Taylor, Walzer)

4.06 Assessment of Communitarianism

4.07 Conclusion

4.08 Bibliography

4.09 Suggested Questions

4.01 Introduction

The term 'communitarianism' is used in modern political theory to mean a brand of ideas of a number of writers who are particularly critical of modern liberal political thinking, and attach primary importance to 'community' rather than the individual'. In sociology 'community' refers to a group of people who are in close relation among themselves by virtue of identity with a particular location. The German sociologist Ferdinand Toennies distinguished between 'Gemeinschaft' (community) and 'Gesellschaft' (society). Whereas the former is based on face-to-face and close relationship built upon sentiment, personal liking, and a sense of emotional identity, the latter is based on definite interests and reasons for associating together. Community denotes smaller area and society denotes larger area of living. Traditional conservative thought emphasizes the idea that community is based upon 'commonality' of origin— blood, kinship, and

historic ties—of a people in villages or close living surroundings, and the idea of 'society' is based upon larger grouping formed on the basis of professional identity, economic interests and larger political affiliations.

Conservatives and socialists stress different bases for the existence of community, but both identify the social relations inherent in community as something greater than the concerns and interests of each individual living in it added together. Liberals are reluctant to conceptualize community on the same elevated basis because of their commitment to individual freedom. Instead they see community as based on the freely chosen associations of individuals with common interests and shared needs. Hence an antagonism has been presented between communitarianism and liberalism.

Communitarianism insists upon the interaction of the social context and self-conceptions of individuals, while liberalism allegedly works with an atomized individual artificially, if not incoherently, divorced from his or her social surroundings. A concern with community can be seen as one of the enduring themes in modern political thought, expressed variously in the socialist stress upon cooperation and fraternity, the Marxist belief in a classless communist society, conservative view of society as an organic whole, bound together by mutual obligations, and even in the fascist commitment to an indivisible national community. However, communitarianism as a school of thought articulating a particular political philosophy emerged only in the 1980s and 1990s. It developed specifically as a critique of liberalism and highlighted the damage done to the public culture of liberal societies by their emphasis upon individual rights and liberties over the needs of the community.

Robert Putnam in the 1990s coined the concept of 'social capital' that forms the central theoretical tool in his works. Social capital is taken to be essentially a community resource consisting of mutual trust, networks, obligation, cooperation, fellow feeling and so on. Social capital grows out of social connections of humans and the attendant norms and obligations. Putnam's argument is that retrieving the condition of social capital in modern western societies can make democracy work. Philosophically Putnam's concept of 'social capital' emphasizes the importance of

community resource as a possible ethical factor for making democracy work. In Putnam's conceptual framework, community forms a basis of civicness, community resources supplying the lifeline to civicness that is so essential to make democracy effective. This communitarian tilt in democratic re-thinking provides an indication of the critique of rights-centric, individualist liberalism.

Sometimes, so-called 'high' and 'low' forms of communitarianism have been identified. 'High' form of communitarianism engages primarily in philosophical debates, while 'low' form of communitarianism is more concerned with public policy.

4.02 Crisis in Liberalism and Western Liberal Society

Communitarianism as a variety of social philosophy emerged in the 1980s within the western liberal societies. It emerged as a challenge to both methodological and substantive assumptions associated with individualist liberalism that gives more importance to individual rights than the individual's obligations.

The intellectual origins of communitarianism are various. The writings of young Marx in the 1840s represent one of the early appearances of communitarian criticism of liberal society. However, Hegel and neo-Hegelian English idealist political philosopher T. H. Green provide important perspectives. Hegel's concept of *sittlichkeit* (ethical life) refers to the ethical norms that arise from the interaction of a person's own subjective values and those objective values present in the institutions of society. In short, this Hegelian term means the shared values of the community. Green's emphasis is on the obligations of citizenship. In the tradition of European socialism, there is the concern with fraternity, while in the anarchist tradition, the focus is on the importance of community in the absence of state coercion. Fundamental questions about the desirable relationships between the 'community', 'state' and 'individual' are hotly contested in practical politics.

Communitarianism was an intellectual response to the growing crisis in the western liberal societies (especially American society) in the 1980s and 1990s. The crises afflicting these societies are seen as the offshoots of liberalism, and

more specifically, excessive individualism. These societies are taken to be the home of radically isolated individuals, rational egotists, and existential agents, men and women protected and divided by their inalienable rights. In combination with other socio-economic factors, excessive stress on individualistic life-styles has produced large-scale social alienation and other accompanying related ill-effects. Robert Putnam in his article "Democracy in America at Century's End" [in A. Hadenius (ed), *Democracy's Victory and Crisis* (1997)] commented on this crisis in American society in the following words :

"A world in which we distrust one another is a world in which social collaboration is a bad gamble, a world in which democracy itself is less safe."

Daniel Bell, himself a communitarian, identified certain indicators of the social crisis in liberal societies afflicted by excessive individualist bent of mind. The communitarians, Bell felt, were "worried by unshackled greed, rootlessness, alienation from the political process, rise in the rates of divorce and all the other phenomena related to a centering on the self and away from communities in contemporary western societies". [D. Bell, *Communitarianism and Its Critics* (1993)]. Bell has identified three areas of communitarian critique of Rawls's liberalism, viz. (a) Self, (b) Universalism, (c) Atomism.

In the same book, Bell has quoted from a leaflet titled "The Responsive Communitarian Platform : Rights and Responsibilities" (1991), issued by a group of American communitarians as part of their movement, what can be taken as the essential attitude and goals of the American communitarians. It reads as follows :

"American men, women and children are members of many communities—families; neighbourhoods; innumerable social, religious, ethnic, workplace and professional associations; and the body politic itself. Neither human existence nor individual liberty can be sustained for long outside the interdependent and overlapping communities to which we all belong. Nor can any community long survive unless its members dedicate some of their attention, energy, and resources to shared projects. The illusive pursuit of private interests erodes the network of social environment, on which we all depend, and is destructive to our shared experiment in democratic self-government. For these reasons, we hold that the

rights of individuals cannot long be preserved without a communitarian perspective. A communitarian perspective recognizes both individual human dignity and the social dimension of human existence."

Bell has commented that, as the above quotation shows, there is a moral issue involved in the communitarian point of view. The moral issue is needed for action to ameliorate the social problem and confront the crisis of the liberal individualist discourse. The fragile bond of community life needs to be strengthened and, for this purpose, a philosophical defence is needed to stem the erosion of community life. The theory of communitarianism seeks to provide the moral issue and the necessary philosophical framework in support of primacy of the community over liberal concept of the individual self.

4.03 Critique of Rawls's Neo-Kantian Liberalism

As an important issue in political theory, communitarianism provides an important critique of Rawlsian liberalism. John Rawls's watershed publication **A Theory of Justice** (1971) provided an agenda of liberal discourse within which most liberal philosophers have developed their points of view either in support of, or in challenge to, the assumptions and theoretical framework of Rawls and his contribution to the concept of distributive justice and the mechanism of welfare state. Rawls built his liberal theory by criticising the theory of utilitarianism and the views of the political left in the 1960s, and by using the arguments of a modified contractualism and of Kantian notion of the individual as an ethical being.

Rawls defended liberal freedoms which, he believed, cannot be overridden by the good of society as a whole. He supported the moral power of the individual to shape, pursue and revise one's life-plans and similar powers of self-determination on the part of other individuals. This moral power of self-determination, again, can only be exercised in the context of available civil and political freedoms. The tenet of the Left criticism was that liberalism has nothing to say about the social and economic conditions that allow for substantive realization of freedoms, and hence liberalism as an ideology serves the interests of the propertied classes.

Rawls's answer to the Left criticism is that liberal equality requires at best partial compensation for unequal talents and abilities. Inequalities cannot be justified by an appeal to unequal endowments. Unjust special advantages must be rejected, since unequal social circumstances do not entitle one to extra rewards and resources. The government intervention to ensure a just distribution of material resources is its logical corollary. Rawlsian justice is thus inseparable from a state exercising redistributive functions.

4.04 Communitarian Critique of Rawlsian Liberalism

Not all communitarian critics of liberalism identify themselves with the 'communitarian movement'. From the communitarian perspective, the main defect of liberalism is its view of the individual as an asocial, atomised, 'unencumbered self'. Such a view is evident in the utilitarian assumption that human beings are rationally self-seeking creatures. Communitarians emphasize, by contrast, that the self is embedded in the community, in the sense that each individual is a kind of embodiment of the society that has shaped the individual's desires, values and purposes. This point draws attention to the process of socialization and also to the conceptual impossibility of separating an individual's experiences and beliefs from the social context that assigns to them meaning.

The communitarian stance has particular implications for the understanding of justice. Liberal theories of justice, communitarians argue, are generally based upon assumptions about personal choice and individual behaviour that make no sense because they apply to a disembodied subject. Hence communitarians assert that theories of justice cannot be valid for universal application, and that such theories are strictly local and particular. This position of the communitarians is somewhat similar to that advanced by post-modern theories.

Communitarians argue that their aim is to rectify an imbalance in modern society and political thought in which individuals, unconstrained by social duty and moral responsibility, have been allowed or encouraged to take account only of their own interests and their own rights. In this moral vacuum, society, quite literally, disintegrates. The communitarian project thus attempts to restore to

society its moral voice and, in a tradition that can be traced back to Aristotle, to construct a 'politics of the common good'. Critics of communitarianism, however, allege that it has both conservative and authoritarian implications. Communitarianism has a conservative disposition in that it amounts to a defence of existing social structures and moral codes. Feminists, for example, have criticised communitarianism for attempting to bolster traditional sex roles under the guise of defending the family. The authoritarian features of communitarianism stem from its tendency to emphasize the duties and responsibilities of the individual over his or her rights and entitlements. William Kymlicka and Bhikhu Parekh have drawn attention to this feature of communitarianism.

The communitarian philosophers have questioned Rawls's emphasis on the individual and his ignoring the community which ought to be the locus of concern for distributive justice. They argue that community shapes the nature of individual, that is, the individual's sense of identity, talents and pursuits in life. According to them, the appropriate locus of concern for a political society must be what is good for the *community* and not what any particular individual should get. For them, the desire to act in accordance with social norms is as powerful and common as a desire to maximise utility.

Communitarians argue that Rawls has neglected the need for widespread participation and a vibrant public sphere in a democratic society. They have been critical of the liberal view that the state should be neutral regarding the plurality of competing conceptions of the good in a democratic society. They claim that liberal theory is too focused on the importance of individual liberty, and that it is insufficiently appreciative of the way in which human beings require a place in a well-functioning community in order to flourish. It is community which socializes human beings into moral values.

Communitarians believe that a political structure has an important role to play in defining both the 'right' and the 'good' and also in helping people within that political structure to seek the 'good'. Like Plato, communitarians believe that human beings can achieve a good life only if they live within a well-functioning society that government must help to create. Needless to say, they, unlike Plato, are generally committed to democratic forms of government.

Communitarianism is usefully contrasted with social democracy, which has succeeded in establishing a permanent presence alongside of, and sometimes conjoined with, liberal politics. Liberals and social democrats alike share a commitment to economic growth. It is a fact that 'community' itself is largely an ideological presence in modern society. As Michael Walzer, himself a communitarian, admitted in the early 1990s that the problem with communitarian critique is that it suggests two different, and deeply contradictory, arguments against liberalism. The first argument aims primarily at liberal practice i.e. politics, and the second argument at liberal theory, but they cannot both be right. It is possible that each one is partly right. [Michael Walzer, "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism", *Political Theory*, vol. 18 (1), February 1990].

Liberal society is fragmentation in practice ; and community is the home of coherence, connection, and narrative capacity. The common theme of all contemporary communitarianisms is neo-conservative lamentation, neo-Marxist indictment and neo-classical handwringing. It is assumed that liberal politics is the best way to deal with the problems of liberal society.

So far as the argument of liberal theory is concerned, communitarianism holds that liberal theory radically misrepresents real life. Liberal theory maintains that men and women are all literally unencumbered, and there is no common standards of values to be followed. This is not the correct situation in reality. Communitarians maintain that liberal theory distorts the reality, as the deep structure even of liberal society is in fact communitarian. Human beings are in fact persons who are in reality bound together. This point is partly true, because there are four types of mobility characterising the social life of American people. These are : geographic mobility, social mobility, marital mobility and political mobility. Hence, Walzer argues that liberalism as a theory requires periodic communitarian correction. Both in its theory and its practice (politics), liberalism expresses strong associative tendencies alongside its dissociative tendencies. Communitarian corrections require a liberal state which must allow individuals to live as they think best.

Contemporary liberals are not committed to a presocial self, but only to a self capable of reflecting critically on the values that govern its socialization.

Communitarian critics, on the other hand, can hardly go on to claim that socialization is everything. The philosophical and psychological issues go very deep, but so far as politics is concerned, there is little to be won on this battlefield.

The central issue for political theory is not the constitution of the self but the connection of constituted selves, the pattern of social relations. The liberal self, reflecting the fragmentation of liberal society, is forced to invent itself anew for every public occasion. As Liberalism tends towards instability and dissociation, it requires periodic communitarian correction.

4.05 Leading Figures of Communitarianism

Communitarian movement is something different from communitarianism as an important issue of liberal political theory. Not all communitarian critics of liberalism identify themselves with the communitarian movement. It is possible to distinguish between three communitarian positions, viz. liberal, conservative, and left. Theoretical exponents of communitarianism share certain common grounds in their criticism of Rawlsian liberalism. Among the communitarian philosophers, the four leading figures who deserve special mention are **Alastair McIntyre, Michael Sandel, Michael Walzer, and Charles Taylor**. Their logic and arguments vary and the conclusion they arrive at is not the same. What unites them is the stand that Rawlsian liberalism does not sufficiently take into account the importance of community for personal liberty, moral and political thinking, and judgments about the well-being of the contemporary world.

Daniel Bell has identified three areas of communitarian critique of Rawlsian liberalism, viz. self, universalism, and atomism.

First, Michael Sandel argues that human beings do not choose all their social attachments like attitude towards parents, caring about neighbours and so on. Individuals are not members of family or nation by personal choice as they choose their life-partners.

Secondly, Michael Walzer argues that instead of formulating the principles from an objective and universal viewpoint, human beings need to be rooted in

their traditions so that they can interpret to fellow citizens the world of meanings. People's lived experiences of society and their shared attitudes motivate their ideas and values. Hence philosophers ground their theories in historically contingent social norms and institutions rather than search for universal principles of justice.

Thirdly, Charles Taylor objects to Rawlsian liberalism, as it supports government intervention to protect civil and political liberties and to ensure fair distribution of economic goods. He questions the legitimacy of resorting to such measures for distributing such goods as community spirit, friendship or traditional identity. The communitarians are worried that over-enthusiasm for the welfare state has eroded economic competitiveness as well as family and social ties. They would support intervention of public authorities for restoring or developing a sense of community belonging, but the state must not dictate the definition of a good life.

However, for the sake of better understanding of communitarian philosophy, a brief introduction to the contributions of the four major figures would be helpful.

Alasdair MacIntyre (b. 1929) a Scottish-born moral philosopher, has developed a neo-classical and anti-liberal communitarian philosophy. In his view, liberalism preaches moral relativism and so is unable to provide a moral basis for social order. He argues that nations of justice and virtue are specific to particular intellectual traditions, and has developed a model of the good life that is rooted in Aristotle and the Christian tradition of St. Augustine and St. Aquinas. His major works include *After Virtue* (1981), *Whose Justice ? Which Rationality* (1998).

MacIntyre's critical analysis is focused on the origins, development and decline of western moral and political culture. He examines many issues of moral philosophy whose connection with contemporary political theory will not be obvious. He does make some references to liberalism in general and to Rawls's work in particular.

MacIntyre accuses liberalism of presupposing an incoherent conception of the person, and of being committed to a form of scepticism about rationality or

objectivity in moral matters. He holds that liberalism misrepresents and underestimates the importance of community life to the identity and integrity of the individual. He views liberalism as far less neutral than it claims between competing conceptions of the good life for human beings. He sees the liberal conception of the self as a consequence of liberalism's failure to perceive the importance of community in the moral life of the individual.

While dwelling on the predicament of contemporary liberal morality, MacIntyre, in his book *After Virtue* (1981), notes that modern liberal democracies are confused over moral positions on such issues as the rectitude of abortion, use of nuclear weapons of mass destruction, and the structure of genuine just societies, and as yet no widely agreed answer to these questions has emerged. There is no overarching framework of rationality on such issues ; rather there is a contrast between personal and impersonal reasons, and the language used is designed to be irrational and arbitrary. That is to say, moral judgments in liberal societies are not objective and impersonal. This moral philosophy he calls 'emotivist', which is based on a manipulative interpersonal relationship.

MacIntyre diagnoses this emergence of emotivist self as the result of the failure of rational morality of the Enlightenment movement. He pleads for reintroducing rationality to morality by means of the concept of 'telos' (purpose or end) in human life. The human person (individual), to him, is not the abstract, ghostly emotivist self. 'Self' must be implicated in, and defined by, social, cultural and historical circumstances.

By "virtue", MacIntyre means "an acquired human quality", and those excellences of character that allow persons (individuals) to move towards the specially human telos. He wants the liberal society to be reconstructed by Aristotelian virtues meant for man as a political animal. That means, virtues such as courage, fidelity and friendship that constitute the framework conditions for a community to maintain itself and an essential part of the form of life at which the people living in a community are aiming. This is the sense in which Aristotelian man is necessarily a political animal.

MacIntyre uses the concept of "practice" as acceptance of the authority of the

standards and paradigms. In social living individuals would derive maximum benefit by subjecting their own personal preferences, tastes and attitudes to the community's authority and standards that currently define the practice. In course of time, the participants' judgment would change the practice. That is to say, participation in shared projects and acceptance of communally and historically determined standards initiate the individual into a pattern of life immune to the threat of emotivism.

If competing allegiances fracture the life of the virtues, MacIntyre's response is the "narrative unity of a human life", that is, the quest for a good life. But the shape of this quest for good life is not the same for all individuals everywhere. MacIntyre brings in the concept of community 'tradition' or social inheritance as a set of practices and a mode of understanding their importance in order to ensure an ordered social life. He clarifies that the community's understanding embodied in such traditions is neither hegemonic nor static ; on the contrary, in a healthy tradition that understanding is the subject of continuous debate at any given moment and across time. In his book *Whose justice ? Which Rationality ?* (1988) MacIntyre attempts to allay the worries about 'tradition'. When any tradition finds it impossible to reduce unresolved difficulties, he suggests that it can overcome the crisis only by developing a new set of concepts or a new innovative synthesis of old doctrines and ideas According to him, traditions as a whole are open to rational assessment.

The discussion above shows that MacIntyre places the central weight upon the interrelated concepts of a practice, the narrative unity of human life and a tradition. This effort makes it clear that he is fundamentally a communitarian thinker who underlines the very possibility of sustaining rationality and objectivity in the arena of moral and political evaluation by locating individuals and their arguments with other individuals within an overarching set of inherently social matrices. This analysis gives the concept of 'community' a broad and vital role. The very idea of morality as a rational or intelligible enterprise assumes importance in the constitutive communitarian framework.

Michael Sandel (b. 1953), American political theorist and an eminent communitarian critic of Rawlsian liberalism, has fiercely criticised individualism

and the notion of the 'unencumbered self'. He argues for conceptions of moral and social life that are firmly embedded in distinctive communities, and emphasizes that individual choice and identity are structured by the moral ties of the community. Sandel has also warned that a lack of embeddedness means that democracy may not long endure. He supports 'civic republicanism', which he associates with United States's political tradition. Sandel's most influential works include *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (1982), and *Democracy's Discontent* (1996).

Sandel is a communitarian critic of liberalism. His famous book *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (1982) focuses on the form of liberalism exemplified by Rawls. Perhaps the most innovative critique of Rawls from a communitarian position has come from Sandel. He is struck by the disconnected, disembodied nature of the people in Rawls's "original position". That Rawls could even conceive of people in this way shows, according to Sandel, the extent to which Rawls and other liberals in the past few hundred years try to understand human beings independently of all activities, desires, ideas, roles and pursuits that characterize human life in an actual society.

Sandel argues that liberal theories fail to come to grips with the nature of our "embeddedness" in a particular time, place, and culture. He underlines the point that a political theory must recognize this fact of embeddedness if it is going to generate laws, institutions, and practices that are genuinely good for us and constitutive of an ideal and fully just society. He calls for pursuing justice not by working out ways that independent and separately conceived selves might profitably relate to one another (that is, in market or in political institutions) but by thinking about how people with attachments that partially constitute their identities can come to know and relate to one another as friends. Only in this way, says Sandel, can one create a "deeper commonality" than benevolence allows, one of "shared self-understanding" as well as affection.

Sandel's views are historically important in communitarian critique of liberalism because his book (1982) first elicited the label 'communitarian' and initiated the debate with liberals. He argues that Rawls is committed to a conception of the

individual that is metaphysically rather than substantively flawed. His point is that Rawls's conception is invalid and incoherent rather than undesirable. It is a misrepresentation of the nature of moral experience rather than advocacy of an unattractive form of moral life.

Secondly, Sandel accuses Rawls of asocial individualism. Rawls imagines that a sense of community can at best describe a possible aim of antecedently individuated selves rather than a possible ingredient of their identity. He assumes, in particular, the good of political community is at best participation in a well-ordered system of cooperation for mutual advantage, a system to which the individuals are in some way logically prior.

Thirdly, Sandel suggests that Rawls's claim to be neutral between competing conceptions of the good is in reality much less plausible than it may appear.

Sandel's critique is ultimately based upon a claim that Rawls's theory of justice is a contemporary example of de-ontological liberalism. Rawls believes that "the right is prior to the good". That is, the claims of right take precedence, and also its principles are independently derived. Sandel claims that Rawls attributes absolute *moral* primacy to justice. The fulcrum of Rawls's theory of justice is that the individual self is not just an autonomous chooser of ends but an antecedently individuated subject in the 'original position'. Sandel argues that Rawls's conception of the self simply cannot account for some of the basic human experiences of, and attitudes towards, family, tribe, class or nation as well as individuals. That is to say, Rawls's conception of the self is incapable of coping with the full range of human moral circumstances and self-understanding.

Sandel further argues that Rawls's understanding of a *political* community is impoverished, because within the Rawlsian theory there is some inconsistency. His "difference principle" requires a constitutive attachment to community on the part of the individual who feels for other members. But this kind of feeling is forbidden in Rawls's conception of the individual as precedently individuated self. As Sandel puts it: "We cannot be persons for whom justice is primary and also be persons for whom the difference principle is a principle of justice."

For Sandel, the liberal conception of the "unencumbered self" lacks depth of moral character. The moral character of the individual comes from his being situated historically within a particular network of social ties. Each individual interprets his individual identity in a context which he did not choose and under circumstances which he cannot fully control. An atomistic conception of the self ("unencumbered self") is quite untenable. Sandel argues that it is impossible to imagine a recognisably human being whose identity could be said to be prior to, and independent of, all constitutive ends. The attributes that the individual has, independently of his will, condition and shape, to a greater or lesser degree, his values and ends and therefore his identity. A human identity is never formed by a free-floating individual, cut off and isolated from all moral ties with significant others, but through a dialogical encounter of recognition with others. Individual's self-understanding depends to some degree on the recognition of parents, friends, lovers, neighbours, colleagues and others. Individual's identities are formed in the encounter with those others who matter to him. It is reasonable to assume that the personal identity of each individual depends, to a greater or lesser degree, on the common good of their political community. Sandel concludes that the community is embedded in the individual self. The 'self' is known by the individual's allegiance and beliefs emanating from membership of the community.

Charles Taylor (b. 1931), a Canadian political philosopher and committed Roman Catholic, is primarily concerned with the issue of the construction of the self. He portrays persons as "embodied individuals". Their identity is largely shaped by history and the social and linguistic context in which they live; true freedom must therefore be "situated". However, in contrast to some other communitarians, he treats the individual, not society, as the key source of moral action. Taylor's best known writings include **Philosophical Papers** (1985), **Sources of the Self** (1989), and **Philosophical Arguments** (1995).

Unlike Sandel and like MacIntyre, Charles Taylor's work in the domain of political theory is integrated into a sweeping analytical account of the development of western moral and political culture from Plato to post-modernism. In this account, Rawls appears only fleetingly while liberalism has a role primarily as

one central strand of modern culture. Rawls is not the sole focus of Taylor's concerns. Moreover, unlike MacIntyre and Sandel, Taylor is not inclined to reject liberalism *per se* ; on the contrary, he thinks that some of the central claims of liberalism are worthy of serious consideration, but only if such claims can be detached from various erroneous or incoherent ways of elucidating and defending them.

That Taylor has constructed a communitarian critique of liberalism is based upon his view that human beings are 'self-interpreting animals', who derive their orientation and attachment to conceptions of the good from the matrix of their linguistic community. The second aspect of Taylor's work is his view that moral judgments and intuitions are essentially capable of rational elucidation.

Taylor visualizes a 'moral space' wherefrom the individual decides what is good, valuable, correct and so on. In his view, the morality structure emanates from community life.

Taylor uses the concept of "hyper good" or superior good for the re-assessment of values in social life. The re-assessment of values is done through practical reasoning.

The only direct criticism of Rawls, to which Taylor does commit himself is the Rawlsian assertion of the priority of the individual's right over social "good". Taylor regards this Rawlsian principle as equivalent to the claim that Rawlsian liberalism embodies a view of justice that is dependent upon a 'thin' theory of the good. Taylor argues that Rawls's liberalism is not neutral to different values ; it gives undue importance to individualist value judgment. Taylor therefore maintains that Rawlsian liberalism cannot be a neutral arbiter between competing conceptions of the social good as it aspires to be. The absolute priority assigned to the right over the good reflects Rawls's assignment of absolute priority to the value of autonomy of the individual. It appears that autonomy is the Rawlsian 'hypergood' (superior good).

Taylor claims that developing, protecting and maintaining human beings in their full autonomy as citizens requires the maintenance of a distinctly liberal

society. His argument is that if 'persons' are understood to be "self-interpreting animals", capable of making autonomous choice of ends, the ideal liberal society should be somewhat different from modern liberal democratic societies actually found in experience. That kind of ideal liberal society should have its modes of negotiation, public debate on moral and political issues, voting system, universities etc framed in such a way that its autonomous individual members would have an identity distinct from that of other people. But without having a common allegiance to those institutions the people will be unable to carry out their instrumental work. That is to say, even autonomous individuals would be committed to defend the community structures underpinning the individualist values.

Taylor thus presents a sweeping historical account of western culture from which certain criticisms of liberalism in general and of Rawls in particular can be deduced.

Michael Walzer (b. 1935), an American political theorist, has developed a form of communitarian and pluralist liberalism. He rejects as misguided the quest for a universal theory of justice and argues instead for the principle of 'complex equality'. According to this principle, different rules should apply to the distribution of different social goods, thereby establishing separate 'spheres' of justice. He nevertheless evinces sympathy for a form of democratic serialism. Walzer's major works include **Spheres of Justice : A Defence of Pluralism and Equality** (1983), and **Interpretation and Social Criticism** (1987).

Walzer's critique of Rawlsian liberalism is pitched as a level significantly different from that of the other three communitarian thinkers examined already. Unlike Sandel, Walzer is not primarily concerned with criticizing the Rawlsian concept of the person ; and unlike MacIntyre and Taylor, he is not interested in presenting a sweeping historical account of western culture, from which certain criticisms of liberalism in general and of Rawls in particular can be deduced. Walzer in his *Spheres of Justice* focuses rather upon the question of what *methodology* is appropriate to the business of political theory. He seeks to know how one should go about constructing and defending a theory of justice. More specifically, he concentrates upon how one should understand the goods for which

a theory of justice seeks to articulate distributive principles, and attacks the understanding of this matter in Rawls's theory.

The essence of Walzer's argument is revealed in his claim that "different social goods ought to be distributed for different reasons, in accordance with different procedures, by different agents ; and all these differences derive from different understandings of the social goods themselves—the inevitable product of historical and cultural particularism" [*Spheres of Justice*, p. 6]. What Walzer has in mind, simply speaking, is that the meaning or significance of different primary social goods change in different historical, cultural contexts or spheres.

Walzer brings in the charge of "methodological abstraction" against Rawls. Distribution of social goods, just like the meaning of social goods, depends on community and culture; hence they vary from community to community according to the context. There cannot be any universal notion of social justice applicable to all communities.

4.06 Assessment of Communitarianism

While reviewing and evaluating the contributions of the major communitarian philosophers, the following points emerge for consideration.

1. The communitarians themselves have failed to produce any concrete ideological alternative to liberalism.
2. They have rightly underlined the importance of community life to the development of human personality, but they have not observed the weaknesses of community life, how it oppresses the individual and how it refuses to tolerate the individual's uniqueness.
3. E. Laclau and C. Mouffe, in their book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy : Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (1985) have observed that there is no reference to power relations in the communitarian view of life. Power struggle is universal and the concept of social order free from power relations is unreal.

4. The moral world of the individual is built by the tradition of the community which itself is the creation of power struggle within the community. The communitarians have not cared to take note of this important perspective.
5. Will Kymlicka in his book *Contemporary Political Philosophy : An Introduction* points out that the Kantian liberals have not created any atomistic self, they have only wanted to protect the individual's right to question the tradition and community values. The oppression over the individual by community tradition is a fact in all societies, developed as well as developing, in different degrees and in different ways. However, the communitarians are silent over this fact of social life.
6. Laclau and Mouffe argue that the individual can fight against corrupt and morally degraded community tradition by receiving inspiration from "counter-tradition" of some other community. This counter-tradition is built through some dominating values which Laclau and Mouffe term as "the constitutive outside".
7. In the western social philosophy the communitarian narrative may be depressed but the yearning for communitarian life can be felt in the struggle between capital and community.
8. Feminist theorists have pointed out that the moral tradition that MacIntyre defends and promulgates has historically been for males only.

4.07 Conclusion

It is not possible nor is it necessary to draw any definitive conclusion on Communitarianism as a critique of Liberalism. The problem is that both 'liberalism' and 'communitarianism' mean different things to different people. The term 'liberal' means different things in the United States and in Britain. The label 'communitarian', although often used to characterise the four theorists discussed above, is not one which they share ; they address apparently different issues and

certainly disagree in their substantive political conclusions. Apart from the communitarian critique, there are other varieties of critiques of liberalism like conservatism, Marxism, feminism, and even libertarianism of Nozick. In fact, Nozick's libertarianism is best understood as a refined version of liberalism. The communitarian critique has concerned itself rather with the freedom-related aspects of liberalism than with its equality-related or distributive aspects.

Much of the weight of the communitarian attack, understood as an attack upon Rawls, depends upon the textual analysis and interpretations. The initial appearance of diversity among the major proponents of communitarianism is, however, misleading. All four major communitarians are alike in basing their work upon a particular, communally-oriented conception of the person (individual). They are united around a conception of human being as integrally related to the communities of culture and language that they create, maintain and inhabit. Culture and society are the creations of human communities ; they cannot be produced or maintained on an individual basis. Mulhall and Swift in their book *Liberals and Communitarians* (1992) offers a comprehensive analysis which has come to a reasonable conclusion : "... the communitarian critique of liberalism might be thought of in Sandelian terms : it is an attempt to identify the limits of the attractiveness and worth of autonomy, not an attempt to deny that attractiveness and worth altogether."

4.08 Bibliography

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4.09 Suggested Questions

Short-answer Questions

1. Briefly define the term 'communitarianism'.
2. "Communitarianism was an intellectual response to the growing crisis in the western liberal societies". Discuss briefly.
3. What are the three areas of communitarian critique of Rawls's liberalism as identified by Daniel Bell ?
4. What is the philosophical relation of Putnam's concept of 'social capital' with communitarianism ?
5. Who are the chief proponents of communitarianism ? Indicate briefly the main targets of their attack.

Long-answer (essay type) Questions

1. Explain the background of the emergence of Communitarianism as a critique of liberalism.
2. Write a note on the Communitarian critique of liberalism.

3. Examine the views of MacIntyre as a communitarian philosopher.
4. Discuss the main points in Sandel's critique of liberalism.
5. Identify and explain the important aspects of Taylor's views as a communitarian philosopher.
6. Explain Walzer's main arguments in his book *Spheres of Justice*.
7. Write a critical evaluation of the communitarianism as a philosophical doctrine.

Unit : 1 □ Pluralism

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Pluralism — Definition, Features
- 1.2 Liberalism and Pluralism
- 1.3 State, Sovereignty and Pluralism
- 1.4 Democracy and Pluralism
- 1.5 A Critical Appraisal
- 1.6 Bibliography
- 1.7 Model Question

1.0 Objective

The present unit has dealt with the meaning and features of pluralism; the inter relationship between liberalism and pluralism; pluralist views about sovereignty and democracy; and a critical appraisal of pluralism as a political philosophy.

1.1 Pluralism — Definition, Features

Pluralism broadly means a belief in, or commitment to, diversity or multiplicity. That is, an acceptance of the existence of 'many'. The term is used in both a normative and a descriptive sense. In a normative sense the term implies that diversity in a society is healthy and desirable, because it safeguards individual freedom and promotes debate, argument and understanding. While used as a descriptive term, 'pluralism' denotes a variety of meanings and forms. For example, Moral Pluralism refers to the coexistence of a multiplicity of ethical values; **Cultural Pluralism** indicates a diversity of lifestyles and cultural norms.

In the arena of politics, the term pluralism is used in the context of political power. Power is a relational concept. An individual or a group enjoys power only in relation to other individuals or groups. The essence of political power is a kind of relationship between individuals (or groups) through which one can influence and control the behaviour of others. In modern day political thinking, pluralism emerged as a challenge to 'monism'. Monism believes in 'one' not in 'many'. Political pluralism accepts the existence of diversity ('many') in social, institutional, and ideological thinking and practice.

In politics, the term pluralism is generally used in two senses. In a broader sense it denotes the existence of electoral choice and a competitive party system. Pluralism in a narrower sense can be seen as a theory of the distribution of political power. It holds that power is widely and evenly dispersed in society rather than concentrated in the hands of the few — the elite or the ruling class. As a result, there emerges multiple centres of power. Pluralism is thus considered as a theory of group politics. The pluralists advocate autonomy and freedom of the varied groups and associations — political, economic, religious, educational and so on. According to the group theory of politics, the various organised groups in the society represent the interests of their members; and such groups, in one way or another, have the access to participate in the political process. Following this approach, the main postulates of pluralism can be identified as below :-

- Each individual / citizen is a member of one or the other social group / organization; some may have membership of multiple organizations at the same time.
- Generally, a kind of equality exists between the groups because, all of them have access to government and, no one is in a dominant position compared to the other.
- There is a high level of internal responsiveness within groups, leaders being accountable to members.
- The State stands in a neutral position in relation to these groups.
- Although there are competing interests amongst the groups, a wider

consensus prevails within them regarding the nature of the political system and the values of openness and competition.

It should be noted that the pluralist approach is also known by some other names such as — 'democratic', 'behavioural', 'individualist' or 'utilitarian' approach. Each such label, within its own perspective identifies certain things and focusses on them. However, of all these, "pluralist" is the most popular and mostly used concept which represents the essential tenets of this approach. We should also keep in mind that pluralism is closely associated with political liberalism. In the next section of this unit, we will discuss about that.

1.2 Liberalism and Pluralism

As a political philosophy, liberalism mainly deals with the issue of individual liberty and the concept of the limited state. The word 'liberal' means non-interference in the activities of the individual. The question is who interferes? Interference is made by the State, church, religion, dominant culture and ideology of the society. The roots of pluralism can be traced back to the political ideas of eminent liberal thinkers John Locke (1632 - 1704) and Montesquieu (1689 - 1775). Locke stated that the state should be formed on the basis of the consent of the ruled, and the state should not have absolute power. He was an ardent supporter of individual freedom, particularly of individual's right to private property. Montesquieu's theory of the 'Separation of Powers' emphasized the importance of a political system with multiple centres of power or authority. He criticised and rejected the ideology of absolute power and dominance. The emergence of 'pluralism' was greatly influenced by Montesquieu's ideas. There were also the impacts of James Madison (1751 - 1836), and the Federalist Papers (1787). The objective of the **Federalist Papers** was to stand against state authoritarianism; i.e., to protect the natural rights of the individuals from the arbitrary intervention of the state. The authors of the 'Papers' therefore presented a theory of 'institutional pluralism', which aimed at the creation of institutional control and equilibrium. This idea later influenced the American political scientist Arthur Bentley. One of the earliest and most influential attempts to develop a

pluralist 'group theory' was undertaken by Bentley in his famous work **The Process of Government** (1908). He emphasised on the role of organised groups as the fundamental building blocks of the political process. Pluralist ideas gradually developed as a result of the concerted efforts of European and American social and political thinkers. Some of the most prominent among those are Otto Vaughn Gierk, F. W. Maitland, Leo Duguit, Ernst Barker, R. M. MacIver, Robert Dahl and Isaiah Berlin. Their ideas led to the emergence of a new trend in political thinking — that, state interference in the private sphere of the individual violates his / her fundamental right.

Enthusiasm for groups as agents of interest articulation and aggregation was strengthened by the spread of behaviouralism in the 1950s and early 1960s. At the same time, the community power studies by Robert Dahl (1961) and Nelson Polsby (1963) asserted the pluralist claim that no single local elite is able to dominate community decision-making. According to the pluralist approach, group politics is the very essence of the democratic process. Indeed, it became common during the 1960s to argue that a form of pluralist democracy has superseded more conventional electoral democracy.

Pluralist thinking has developed within the liberal democratic structure of the society and state. 'Liberalism' means non-interference in individuals' 'own' sphere; i.e. 'freedom from state interference'. Liberalism aims at restraining state power and giving power to the people. The liberals believe that the political institutions in a liberal democracy can control the 'powerful' and ensure the participation of the people in the political process. Pluralism speaks about dispersion of political power and restraining of misuse of state power. According to the pluralists, there exists a countervailing force in a liberal democratic system. This force leads to the emergence of certain groups which stand against centralised and absolute power. The pluralists consider politics as a process which can be identified through the competition of different political parties and groups. Government functions on the basis of popular consent and remains accountable to the people. The responsibility of the opposition party is to keep vigil over government and to protect the interests of the minorities. The presence of multiple

political parties and groups ensures the process of decentralization of power. Thus, the power of the government is checked and, the people gets opportunity to exercise power. The pluralists argue that a liberal democratic system accepts and honours the diversities of ideas, opinions and approaches. Thus, in a pluralist democratic system the role of public opinion is very significant.

1.3 State, Sovereignty And Pluralism

Pluralism emerged as an eloquent protest against the monistic theory of state sovereignty. Monism endows the state with supreme and unlimited power. The state is the exclusive source from which law emanates. State's legal framework provides the means by which men with varying and conflicting interests are able to live together peacefully and rationally. Pluralism, on the other hand, views the state simply as an institution in which there exists no single source of authority—it is divisible into parts and should be divided. The pluralists consciously recognise the essential quality of the modern society viz, the variety of associations within it. According to them, different groups and associations emerge to fulfil the various needs of individual's life. They view the modern society as a web of associations, and, stress the plural dimension of society in opposition to the monistic conception of the state. Associations are not created by the state; they emerge naturally and spontaneously. Therefore, such associations must have functional freedom. The state is just one among many associations and thus, must not monopolise sovereignty. Pluralists are in favour of the autonomy and freedom of the various groups and associations in the society.

In the history of political philosophy the concept of 'sovereignty' was not much in use before the 15th century. The influence of christianity gradually began to grow in the realm of intellectual exercise since the fall of the Roman Empire. Later, during the religious reform movement, the authority and dominance of the Pope was challenged. The issue of political allegiance loomed large. Sovereignty as an essential component of the modern state was the product of the circumstances prevailing in the 16th century. The struggle between the monarchy and the church ultimately gave rise to the modern theory of sovereignty. The concept of sovereignty

was first presented in a theoretical form by Bodin, the famous French political thinker of the sixteenth century. The then war-torn France needed an absolute sovereign authority to establish order and peace. Bodin thus pleaded for a well-governed commonwealth. In his famous work **Six Books on Republic** (1570) Bodin stated that sovereignty means "supreme power over citizens and subjects unrestrained by the laws." Subsequently the theory of sovereignty was further developed by Hobbes, Rousseau, Bentham and others. During the 19th century, John Austin, an English jurist became the principal exponent of the classical theory of sovereignty. In his famous "Lectures on Jurisprudence" (1832) Austin made a clear exposition of the legal and monistic theory of sovereignty. His definition of sovereignty is as follows : "If a determinate human superior not in a habit of obedience to a like superior receives habitual obedience from the bulk of a given society, that determinate superior is sovereign in that society, and the society (including the superior) is a society political and independent." This definition has far-reaching implications. First, the state is a legal order in which there is a determinate authority acting as the ultimate source of power. Second, the authority of the state is unlimited. Third, law is the command of the sovereign. And, finally, sovereignty is indivisible. Monism thus believes in absolute, total and unlimited power of the sovereign.

Pluralism emerged as an intellectual movement against monism in the last half of the nineteenth century. The spread of industrialisation and democracy led to a host of social and economic changes such as—creation of various kinds of voluntary social associations and groups, transformation in the forms of people's social existence and allegiance, increasing international interdependence and cooperation. All these created the perspective of the emergence and spread of pluralism. The theory of political pluralism was developed by a number of social and political thinkers from Europe and America. Some of the most prominent among those were Durkheim, Gierke, Maitland, G.D.H. Cole, Duguit, Laski, Barker, Lindsay and MacIver. The pluralists are against absolute and unlimited state power. They put emphasis on political decentralisation and individual freedom. According to them, the various social associations and groups are as significant and natural as the state. Those are essential for the full fledged

development of the individual. Pluralist thinkers like Lindsay, MacIver and Laski have regarded such associations as objects of deeper individual loyalties than the state. The state thus, they opine, can not alone claim absolute sovereignty. The sovereign power of the state can never be absolute, unlimited and inalienable.

Pluralists have criticised the monistic theory of sovereignty mainly from three stand points — (a) social structure, (b) law, and (c) international society and international law. They argue that there is a basic difference between state and society. Society is by nature associational. Various social groups and associations have their independent identities and collective consciousness. The state may control the external behaviour of the individual, but can not help in realising his/her inner potentials. According to pluralism, if law is regarded and accepted only as the command of the sovereign, then the importance of social norms, customs, religious practices etc. get ignored. In every society those occupy very significant position besides the command of the sovereign. Infact, even the sovereign itself cannot ignore those. Moreover, the external sovereignty of the state is also not absolute. In modern day world, no nation-state can frame its foreign policy with full independence by totally ignoring international law, rules and regulations, treaties and world public opinion. The external sovereignty of the state is also controlled to a large extent by its being a member of the international organisation.

In the light of the above discussion, the main postulates of the pluralist theory of sovereignty can be identified as follows :

(a) society is by nature plural and federal, (b) like the state, other social groups and associations are also necessary and significant in individual's life, (c) the individual expresses his/her loyalty not only to the state—thus sovereign power is divisible, and (d) law is not the command of the sovereign—it is only an expression of social needs and individual's sense of justice.

We have mentioned in the begining of this unit that there is a close relationship between pluralism and political liberalism. The pluralist approach developed within the structure of liberal democracy. One of the major consequences of the spread of liberal democracy was the emergence of pluralist theory of

democracy. In the next section of the present unit, we will briefly discuss that theory.

1.4. Democracy And Pluralism

Pluralist theory about democracy emerged in a relatively recent period. This theory can be regarded as an outcome of the pluralist political philosophy.

The pluralists consider the theory and practice of pluralism as the essence of democracy. According to them, democracy is a process of bargaining among relatively autonomous groups; the existence and functioning of such groups in a democracy adds a pluralistic character to the polity. Pluralism interprets democracy as a political game played by a great variety of groups. Government is considered as the focal point of public pressure and its task is to make policies which reflect the highest common group demand. Democracy is seen as a pluralist political system where the management of public affairs is shared by a number of groups having different values, sources and methods of influence.

One of the major tenets of pluralism is that political power is widely and evenly dispersed in society, rather than concentrated in the hands of an elite or a ruling class. The policy-making process, however centralised it may appear in form, is in reality, a highly decentralized process of bargaining among relatively autonomous groups. Public policy is not a product of the will of the elite or the chosen few. On the contrary, it is an outcome of the interaction of all groups who make claims upon or express interest in that particular issue.

One of the most influential modern exponents of pluralist theory is **Robert Dahl**. Dahl contrasts modern democratic systems with the classical democracy of Ancient Greece, using the concept '**polyarchy**' to refer to rule by the many, as distinct from rule by all citizens. His empirical studies (*Who Governs*, 1963) led him to conclude that the system of competitive elections prevents any permanent elite from emerging and ensures wide, if imperfect, access to political power. He elaborated that although the politically privileged and economically powerful exerted greater power than ordinary citizens, no ruling or permanent elite was able to dominate the political process. The word **polyarchy** is derived from Greek **poly**

which means "many" and *kratos* meaning "rule" or "strength", Robert Dahl used the term 'polyarchy' to mean rule by the many, as distinct from rule by all citizens. According to him, the fundamental democratic principle is the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens, considered as political equals" with unimpaired opportunities. 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. In his 1989 book, **Democracy and its critics** Dahl identified the following attributes of a 'polyarchy' :

(a) elected officials, (b) free and fair elections, (c) inclusive suffrage, (d) the right to run for office, (e) freedom of expression, (f) alternative information, and (g) associational autonomy. Dahl hypothesised that each of these attributes can be quantified, and suggested using the term polyarchy to call an organization that scores high on the scales for all these attributes. He viewed polyarchy as a system that manages to supply a high level of inclusiveness and a high level of liberalization to its citizens.

1.5. A Critical Appraisal

Pluralism became quite popular as a reaction against the monistic theory of state sovereignty. But it is also true that pluralism has certain limitations. Critics have identified those which we discuss below.

Firstly, the pluralists have failed to make clear distinctions between moral and legal principles of sovereignty, and between the state and government. State and government are not identical. To protest against the government does not mean non-allegiance to the state.

Secondly, pluralism has its inner contradictions and vagueness. It is true that the pluralists consider the presence of groups and associations in individual's life as significant, but they have not been able to properly define the nature of the interrelationship between the state and such groups.

Thirdly, in theory, the pluralists provide a basis for the reduction of state

activities and decentralisation of authority, while in practice they assign to the state much power.

Fourthly, pluralism did not sufficiently realise the nature of the state as an expression of class-relations.

Finally, the pluralist objection to monistic theory of law tends to confuse the substance with the form of law.

Notwithstanding its many limitations, the significance of pluralism cannot be denied. It emerged at a time as a political theory when individual rights and freedom were being violated by the interference of the omnipotent state. Pluralism was able to protect democracy by raising the demand of autonomy for different social groups and associations. Pluralism opposes authoritarianism and believes in the freedom of the individual and groups. No doubt, it was a timely protest against the monistic theory.

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1.7 Model Questions

1. Discuss the salient features of the pluralist theory.
2. Analyse the pluralist view about sovereignty
3. Examine the significance and limitations of pluralism as a political philosophy.
4. Discuss the pluralist view about democracy.
5. Analyse Robert Dahl's concept of 'polyarchy.'

Unit : 2 □ Consociational Democracy

Structure

- 2.1 Objective**
- 2.2 Meaning and Nature of Consociational Democracy**
- 2.3 The characteristics of consociational Democracy**
- 2.4. Favourable conditions for consociational Democracy**
- 2.5 Evaluation**
- 2.6 Bibliography**
- 2.7 Model Questions**

2.1 Objective

This unit has discussed the meaning and nature of consociational democracy, identified its basic characteristics and favourable conditions, and made an evaluation of this particular form of government.

2.2. Consociational Democracy : Meaning And Nature

Democracy is one of the major forms of government or political system. As a people's government the basis of democracy is human society where individuals live a collective social life. In theories of political science, the relationship between human society and democracy has been considered as one of the determinant of governmental stability/instability. It has been argued that social uniformity and political unity can only lead to a stable democracy. The underlying meaning of such an argument is that those societies which are deeply divided in terms of class, race, religion, language etc. can not be favourable for stable democracy. Some liberal democratic theorists—such as John Stuart Mill- argued that in a multi-racial society democracy is “near impossible” and in a multi-lingual society “totally impossible”.

The concept of Consociational Democracy emerged as an alternative approach to the above mentioned idea of democracy. Consociational democracy speaks of a possible model through which stable democracy can be established and sustained even in a pluralistic and multi-layered society. The term 'consociational democracy' is most closely associated with the works of Arend Lijphart. In the late 1960s, he examined it as a type of democratic system when making reference to the political systems of Scandinavian countries and of Netherlands and Belgium. Lijphart has explained and analysed the concept of consociationalism in some of his most well-known works such as, "Typologies of Democratic systems" (1968), **The Politics of Accommodation : Plualisum and Democracy in the Netherlands** (1968), and **Democracy in Plural Societies** (1977). However, Lijphart was not the first to use the concept of consociational democracy. Lijphart stated that he had "merely discovered what political practitioners had repeatedly invented years earlier. John Mc Garry and Brenden O' Leary trace consociationalism back to 1917, when it was first employed in the Netherlands.

Consociationalism is a form of government that contrasts with the majoritarianism of Westminster model and is particularly suited to the needs of divided or plural societies. Consociationalism has been widely practiced, particularly in continental Europe since 1945. Examples include Austria during 1945-66, Belgium since 1918, Netherlands and Luxembourg in the 1917-67 period and, in certain respects, modern-day Israel and Canada.

Lijphart opines that to establish and sustain stable democracy in a multi-dimensional society may be tough, but not impossible. Consociational democracy operates against the centrifugal tendency inherent in a pluralist society. At the basis of this exists the cooperative mentality and behaviour of the leaders of the different sections of the people. To properly comprehend the nature of consociational democracy it must be placed against majoritarian democracy. In this second form of democracy power remains concentrated in the hands of the political party which gets majority in the election and forms the government. The features of such a form of government are centralised power, disproportionate electoral system, and rule of the absolute majority. On the other hand, the basis

of consociational democracy is the idea of division of power. The consociational theory of the distribution of power claims that in a deeply divided society division of power is an essential condition of democracy. A consociational state is one which has major internal divisions along ethnic, religious or linguistic lines, with none of the divisions large enough to form a majority group, yet nonetheless manages to remain stable, due to consultation among the elites of its major social groups. Consociational states are often contrasted with states having majoritarian electoral systems.

2.3. The Characteristics of Consociational Democracy

Arendt Lijphart has identified four key characteristics of consociational democracies :

(1) A grand coalition government (between parties from different segments of society). Elites of each pillar come together to rule in the interests of society because they recognise the dangers of non-cooperation.

(2) Segmental autonomy (in the cultural sector). This creates a sense of individuality and allows for different culturally based community laws.

(3) Proportionality (in the voting system and in public sector employment). Representation is based on population.

(4) Minority/Mutual veto. Consensus among the groups is required to confirm the majority rule. Mutuality means that the 'minority' is unlikely to successfully block the majority. Lijphart argues that in a plural and deeply fragmented society, there exists divided loyalty. The strength of consociationalism is that it offers an institutional solution to the problems of divided societies that is both stable and democratic. This it achieves by balancing compromise against autonomy : matters of common or national concern are decided jointly by representatives of all key segments, whilst allowing the segments the greatest possible independence in relation to other concerns. In fact, consociational democracy provides for a working government in a society sharply divided by multifarious interests. However, in order to promote a true understanding and cooperation among various

segments, it is necessary to resolve their differences at the intellectual and emotional levels.

When a consociational democracy operates in a political system, then generally the presence of the following political/administrative process/structure can be identified. Such as, coalition cabinets; balance of power between the executive and the legislature; power of judicial review; bicameral legislature; proportional representation; federal system; a rigid constitution; and a neutral head of the state. These characteristics, more or less prominently, were exhibited by all the classic examples of consociationalism—Lebanon, Cyprus, Switzerland, Austria, Netherlands, Belgium, Fiji, and Malaysia. While in some of these countries consociationalism has succeeded in the long run, in others it has failed. Lijphart, thus, tries to identify the “favourable conditions” for the success of consociationalism.

2.4. Favourable Conditions for Consociational Democracy

On the basis of a comparative study of the consociational democracies in different countries, Lijphart has identified the following favourable conditions for the success of the same :

- (1) Overarching territorial loyalty to the state. Under the umbrella of such grand allegiance, the degree of group conflict decreases.
- (2) A multiple balance of power.
- (3) A tradition of elite accommodation and compromise
- (4) Segmental isolation of ethnic communities, and existence of some cross-cutting cleavages with otherwise segmental isolation.
- (5) A small number of political parties in each segment.
- (6) Small size of the territory to which a consociational structure is applied, and, small population size reducing the policy load.
- (7) Socio-economic equality.
- (8) A moderate multiparty system with segmental parties.

Lijphart stresses that these conditions are neither indispensable nor sufficient to account for the success of consociationalism. John Mc Garry and Brenden O' Leary argue that these conditions are key to the establishment of democratic consociational power-sharing : elites have to be motivated to engage in conflict regulation; elites must lead differential segments; and there must be a multiple balance of power, but more importantly the subcultures must be stable. Mc Garry and O' Leary are advocates of liberal consociations which reward whatever salient political identities emerge in democratic elections, whether these are based on ethnic groups, or on sub-groups or trans-groups identities.

2.5. Evaluation

In a consociational democracy all groups, including minorities, are represented on the political and economic stage. Supporters of consociationalism argue that it is a more realistic option in deeply divided societies than **integrationist** approaches to conflict management.

A consociational form of rule is specially suitable also in a federal system. In a federation when group-wise and regional divisions overlap, federalism turns into an useful constitutional method to realise in practice the concept of divided autonomy.

Consociational democracy also has its shortcomings. Those are discussed below briefly :

The combination of conditions that favour consociationalism is so complex that it is appropriate only to very particular societies, and for limited periods of time. It may not be a solution that is suitable for all divided societies. Consociationalism has been criticised as being inherently unstable, its emphasis upon power-sharing and the protection of minority interests having the potential to create an arena for struggle amongst rival segments rather than the basis for compromise.

Consociational democracy focuses on diverging identities such as ethnicity instead of integrating identities such as class, institutionalising and entrenching

the former. Furthermore, it relies on rival cooperations, which is inherently unstable.

Donald L. Horowitz argues that consociationalism can lead to the reification of ethnic divisions, since "grand coalitions are unlikely because of the dynamics of intraethnic competition."

Arend Lijphart opines that favourable conditions for consociational democracy exists also in the divided societies of the developing countries of the East. Keeping in mind the depth of social divisions in these countries, discarding the democratic model of "government versus opposition" and accepting the consociational model would be more rational. In most of the developing countries, society is not unitary in nature. There exists various autonomous social groups based on language, religion, race etc. For these countries the ideal model should be consociational democracy and not the majoritarian model of the West. Once it was being argued that a stable democracy can be established only in an uniform society. A pluralistic society is not conducive to democratic stability. Experiments with consociational democracy (both in the West and the East) have proved this idea wrong. Stable democracy has been established in a number of multi-dimensional and multicultural societies throughout the world.

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2.7. Model Questions

1. Define Consociational Democracy and analyse its nature.
2. Discuss the main characteristics of a consociational democracy.
3. Identify the favourable conditions for consociational democracy.

Unit : 3 □ Elite Theory

Structure

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Definition and Thpology of 'Elites'

3.2 Main Postulates of Elite Theory

3.3 Major Proponents of Elite Theory

3.3.1 Vilfredo Pareto

3.3.2 Gaetano Mosca

3.3.3 Robert Michels

3.3.4 C. Wright Mills

3.4 Evaluation

3.5 Bibliography

3.6 Model Questions

3.0 Objectives

The present unit at the outset has dealt with the definition and typologies of 'elites'. It has examined the basic postulates of the elite theory with reference to the views of some of its major proponents. An evaluation of the theory has been made in the last section.

3.1 Definition and Typology of Elites

The term 'elite' was derived from the French language where it meant to be the highest, the best or the excellent. Used in a neutral or empirical sense, however, it refers to a minority in whose hands power, wealth or privilege is

concentrated, justifiably or otherwise. The term was first used in English in 1823 in respect of the social groups. Elitism is a belief in, or practice of, rule by an elite or minority. It tends to divide society into 'excellent' and 'ordinary' people who are placed in different positions. Elites are always the minority and the common people the majority in a society. In the realm of politics the concept of elite is primarily used in connection with the nature of distribution of political power.

There are three distinct perspectives on the distribution of power in society. The first is that of classical democracy which postulates the rule of the majority. The second view states that even a democracy depends on leadership, and the idea of democracy therefore must come to terms with the realities of unequal distribution of resources and skills of leadership and power in society. The third view is elitist and proclaims that it is not only a fact but also a desirable phenomenon that a dominant minority rules regardless of the forms of government. The classical elitist theorists—**Vilfredo Pareto**, **Gaetano Mosca** and **Robert Michels**—subscribe to such views. They were opposed to both democracy and socialism. In fact, elitism developed as a critique of such egalitarian ideas as democracy and socialism. They were sceptical about democracy because it is the few who possess the necessary power and skill to rule. Their hostility to marxian socialism was based on the argument that since it is the few who have always ruled, it is that few who will continue to rule even in a socialist society.

There exists stratification within the elites. Those belonging to the highest echelon explains and tries to legitimise to the people the decisions taken by them. At the lowest strata exists the bureaucracy whose responsibility is to implement the decisions. Elites can be 'strategic' or 'segmental'. The elites, whose judgements, works and decisions are highly significant for the whole society, are called 'strategic elites'. And those who are related with different sections or parts of the society, are called 'segmental elites'—such as, 'cultural elites', 'economic elites' etc. **C. Wright Mills** argues that within the strategic elite there exists a smaller group. He has labelled it as 'power elite'. For example,

big industries and business tycoons, top army officials and political leaders in the USA fall under this group, and they are the real rulers. Famous sociologist **T. B. Bottomore** has classified the elites in five categories—(a) hereditary elite, (b) the middle class, (c) revolutionary intellectuals, (d) colonial administrators, and (e) nationalist leadership.

3.2 Main Postulates of Elite Theory

The core of the elitist theory is that in any society, there is, and must be, a minority of the population which makes the major decisions in the society and rules over the majority. This minority, the 'political class' or the 'governing elite', includes the inner circle of those who influence governmental decisions. This selected few gains its dominant position by means beyond ordinary elections. Its influence may be due to its embodying certain social or religion values, heredity or certain personal qualities. Elitism regards the social division as natural and functional. Elites have three very distinctive qualities—group consciousness, group cohesion, and will to work. These qualities make them superior in relation to the masses. The elitists have described in various ways the qualities and social opportunities a group needs to possess in order to gain an elite position. Elite theory believes that power by its very nature is cumulative. Power gives access to more power as it becomes a means to obtain other social goods—economic influence, social status, wealth and so on.

Elite theory has developed as a result of a number of significant contributions by some eminent social scientists. In the next section, we will briefly deal with some of the major proponents of elitism.

3.3 Major Proponents of Elite Theory and their views

3.3.1 Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923)

Italian sociologist Pareto in his famous work, *The Mind and Society* has used the term 'elite' to mean a superior social group—a group of people who show highest ability in their fields of activity. It is a minority group which takes

all major decisions in a society. The other part of society who fall short of this level of ability is called the 'masses'. For Pareto, elite is a value-free term inclusive of all those who score high on scales measuring any social value or commodity such as power, wealth or knowledge. Though he mostly dealt with economic and political elite, Pareto is ready to extend the use of the term 'elite' to religion (the most holy), to art (the most artistic), and even to ethics (the most virtuous)—in short, to all those who constitute the higher stratum in society.

Within the elite, Pareto distinguished between the 'governing elite' and the 'non-governing elite'. The governing elite consists of individuals who directly or indirectly play a considerable role in government. The non-governing elite includes the rest. Governing elite is one that wields power for the time being while non-governing elite constantly tries to replace it by showing greater ability and excellence. In short, there is a constant competition between these two categories of elites. This results in what is called the **"circulation of elites"**. In any case, masses have no chance of entering the ranks of elites, Pareto argues that the study of historical changes revolves to a great extent around the study of the elite, and that events and decisions among the elite have more consequences for the history of a society than those which occur among its masses.

Pareto in his seminal work *The Rise and Fall of Elites* has presented several propositions about the elite. He states that the greater part of human actions have their origin not in logical reasoning but in sentiment. Man, though impelled to act by non-logical motives, likes to tie his actions logically to certain principles and therefore, invents these **a posteriori** in order to justify his actions. On this basis Pareto says that human actions are the combination of 'residues' and 'derivations'. Residues are the major motivations and derivatives are the external elaboration of human actions. Pareto has identified six such residues—(a) combination or a tendency to invent and embark on adventures; (b) persistence or preservation; (c) expressiveness; (d) sociability; (e) integrity; and (f) sex. Of these, the first two, according to Pareto, are specially significant in analysing the role of elites in society.

Derivations are the ways in which actions assume the appearance of logical

actions. But it does not play a significant role in Pareto's analysis of elites. Pareto's discussion rather centres around the residues. He compares the dominant residues in an elite. The focal point of his analysis is that by means of the two residues—combination (foxlike quality of cunningness) and preservation (lionlike persistence or use of force)—the elite keeps itself in power. However, in order to rationalize or justify its actions (or in order to use power), it takes recourse to derivations or myths which help it to dupe the masses. Pareto observes that 'the lions are more suited to the maintenance of status quo under stable conditions, while 'the foxes' are adaptive and innovative, and cope better during periods of change. His concept of the 'circulation of elites' implies more than the idea that new men of money or power replace the old ones. It means that the dominant residue in the elite changes, and that leads to the changes in the position of the elites. Pareto states that "the history of man is the history of the continuous replacement of elites : as one ascends, another declines. Such a view of social change is cyclical in nature.

3.3.2 Gaetano Mosca (1858–1941)

Mosca, another celebrated elitist theorist, uses the term 'elite' in the sense of a political or ruling class. In his noted work **The Ruling Class (1896)**, he postulated that the people are necessarily divided into two groups : the rulers and the ruled. In a famous passage he writes : "In all societies two classes of people appear—a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolises power and enjoys the advantages that power brings; whereas the second, the more numerous class, is directed and controlled by the first, in a manner that is now more or less legal, now more or less arbitrary and violent, and supplies the first, in appearance at least, with material means of subsistence and with the instrumental abilities that are essential to the validity of the political organism."

The ruling class controls most of the wealth, power and prestige in society. The ruled are not competent to replace it. What ever form of government might be adopted, it is always this minority which exercises all power in society. Mosca states that in all countries "the management of public affairs is in the hands

of a minority of influential persons, to whom, willingly or unwillingly, the majority defer". He argues further that, in reality it is always the few who rule. The minority is cohesive and organised (also because it is a minority), and its domination over the unorganised majority is therefore inevitable. The larger the political community, the more difficult it is for the majority to organize itself for reaction against the minority. The ruling minorities are distinguished from the masses by their personal and social qualities. They either themselves have some material, intellectual or moral superiority, or they are the heirs of individuals who possessed such qualities. Consequently they are esteemed and influential in their society. Mosca makes interesting observations on the point of heredity. He says that all political classes tend to become hereditary in fact if not in law.

While Pareto regards intelligence and talent as the outstanding qualities of elite, Mosca's ruling class was distinguished by its capacity of **organization**. Mosca argued that the dominance of the ruling class was essential to provide for proper organization of the unorganised majority.

Like Pareto, Mosca also talks of the 'circulation of elites' and forcefully makes the point that the whole history of civilized world comes down to a conflict between the tendency of dominant elements to monopolise political power and transmit it by inheritance, and the tendency toward a dislocation of old forces and the emergence of new ones. Mosca, however, takes a modest view of the use of force and prefers change through persuasion. He advises the governing elite to bring about gradual alterations in the political system in order to make it conform to changes in public opinion.

3.3.3 Robert Michels (1876–1936)

Michels reveals another dimension of the 'elite' phenomenon. In his famous work **Political Parties : A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy** (1911) Michels propounded his 'Iron Law of Oligarchy'. He proceeded to demonstrate that every organization—whatever its original aims—is eventually reduced to an 'oligarchy', that is the rule of the chosen few who tend to use their authority in self-interest. He does not merely say

like Mosca, that organizational ability grants power, but stresses that the very structure of an organized society gives rise to an elite. In Michel's formulation, 'who says organization, says obigarchy.' He holds that majority of human beings are apathetic, indolent and slavish. They are permanently incapable of self-government. So they have to depend upon their leaders for pursuing their social objectives. Political parties, trade unions and other organizations are the vehicles of such leadership, Michel proceeded to test his hypothesis by analysing the structure of decision making in the socialist parties of Europe, and in particular the German Socialist Party in the years before the war. He found that these political parties, though committed to democracy and socialism, allowed power and privilege to a small group of leaders who controlled the party organization.

Michels points out that any organization may be set up with democratic aims, but as the organization grows in size and complexity, its management is left to the professional experts. In due course these experts or leaders become indispensable for the organization. They become so prominent by virtue of their expertise and experience that it becomes very difficult to replace them. In exercising their undisputed power they set aside the original aims of the organization. The growth of oligarchy in every organization becomes so inevitable as if the process is governed by an 'iron law'.

The 'iron law of oligarch' rules out the possibility of 'circulation of elites', as envisaged by Parato and Mosca. It belies all hopes of democracy in any society or organization. All forms of government are also destined to be reduced to obigarchy.

3.3.4 C. Wright Mills (1916-62)

Mills, an American sociologist, presented a new version of elite theory in his famous work, **The Power Elite** (1956). He preferred the term 'power elite' to 'ruling class'. While the marxian concept of ruling class implied that an economically dominant class would exercise all political power in a society, Mill's concept of power elite implied a combination of several groups who exercised all powers by virtue of their high status in all important spheres of social life.

Mills made an elitist analysis of American society and its power structure. He sees power in society as attached to institutions, and defines the 'power elite' as 'those who occupy the command posts'. He identifies there major elites in the American society—the corporation heads, the political leaders, and the military chiefs. These three groups taken together constitute the power elite. They not only share their cultural and psychological orientations, but also often share their social origins. In other words, the top echelons in economic, military and political organizations in the USA are linked by ties of family and friendship and shared common social backgrounds. Mills describes American society as a mass society in which the power elite decides all important issues and keeps the masses quiet by flattery, deception and entertainment. The power elites do not owe their power to fulfilling social demands. They constitute a self-conscious class whose members help each other on the basis of mutual understanding, tolerance, and co operation in order to strengthen each others power and position.

3.4 Evaluation

The idea of elitism is denied by those who uphold classical democratic ideas. It is pointed out that political democracy envisages that the choice of personnel should be 'open and subject to negotiation and bargaining', among the various elements of the population. Robert Dahl's concept of 'polyarchy' stresses the 'continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens'. Dahl holds as untrue the assertion that an individual or a group controlling one resource of power can automatically control other resources of power. Nelson Polsby challenges the view that a socio-economic elite dominates political life or that there is a single all purposive elite.

The foregoing discussion shows that we can find a new conception of elitist democracy, as against the classical concept of democracy. On the one hand, it is not realistic to deny the existence of the elite in all societies; on the other, it is not legitimate to consider elitism as a complete negation of democracy. Indeed, as democracy has come to be seen as a competitive, open and pluralistic

polity, elitism is seen as a safeguard against the concentration of power that is a greater danger in a totalitarian society.

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3.6 Model Questions

1. Examine the basic postulates of the Elite Theory.
2. Define 'elite'. Attempt a typology of elites.
3. Make an evaluation of elitism as a political theory.
4. Examine Pareto's/Mosca's /Michel's/C. Wright Mills' elite theory in brief.

Unit : 4 □ Multiculturalism

Structure

4.0 Objectives

4.1 Meaning and development of the concept of Multiculturalism.

4.2 Main postulates of multiculturalism.

4.3 Conclusion

4.4 Bibliography

4.5 Model Questions

4.0 Objective

This unit deals with the meaning of multiculturalism, the emergence of the concept, and the main postulates of multiculturalism.

4.1 Meaning and Development of the concept of Multiculturalism

In the contemporary period, multiculturalism has emerged as a significant concept in the discourse of politics throughout the world. Today in almost all the nation-states, the nature of the society is multicultural. That is, the population consists of various cultures and ethnic groups. There exist many diversities among them. The principle of multiculturalism extends due recognition to all such diverse groups. It also concedes that none of the cultural perspectives can be treated as inherently superior or inferior to others. Multiculturalism enables different cultures within a community to flourish and treat each other with mutual respect. Some proponents of multiculturalism argue that this is a necessary condition of individual's freedom. Joseph Raz, e.g., has argued in his article "Multiculturalism : A Liberal Perspective" (1994) that individual's autonomy is intimately tied up with access to his culture. It enables him to make good choices befitting a good life if his is flourishing and being respected by others. Thus,

the sense of identify is closely linked with individual's self-fulfilment.

Multiculturalism stands for an advocacy of plurality of cultures in a nation conceived as a cultural field. Cultural diversity within a country goes well with the enjoyment of liberty, as different cultural groups maintain their identities freely and enrich the cultural mosaic of the nation. Multiculturalism emerged as a challenge (particularly since the 1960s) to the idea of the nation as a culturally and politically united whole. Nationalism has always been an example of the politics of identity, in the sense that it gives people a history; tells them who they are; forges social bonds and a collective spirit amongst them, and creates a sense of destiny larger than individual existence. Multiculturalism is also a form of identity politics; but its stress is rather on the 'politics of difference' stressing the range of cultural diversity and identity-related differences in many modern societies. Multiculturalism not only recognizes the fact of cultural diversity, but also holds that such differences should be respected and publicly affirmed.

In order to maintain peace and solidarity in a multicultural society, it is necessary that all cultural groups get due recognition, enjoy due respect and rights as equal citizens. Multiculturalism has emerged as a response to this vital demand. It implies an attitude and policy of accommodating diverse cultural groups within the national mainstream of a country. This involves action at two levels : (a) different cultural groups of the country, particularly the dominant cultural group, should cultivate an attitude of toleration and accommodation toward other cultural groups in order to give them a sense of security and dignity; and (b) the state should secure their members, equal rights as citizens and provide for their due representation in decision-making bodies.

Pluralism is often considered as the predecessor of the concept of multiculturalism; though the tenets of pluralism were not very well formulated. The use of this concept can be found in the latter half of the 19th century in the context of the American social reality. Pluralism argued that different ethnic groups—Jewish Americans, Irish Americans etc.—living in the United States should be treated as the legitimate part of the greater American society. Their

different ethnic identities should be given due recognition and respect. Centering this particular approach, developed the two contrasting concepts of "melting pot" and "salad bowl". According to the first concept, in the American society various types of cultures have melted together, and such amalgamation has resulted in the emergence of a single culture—i.e., the American culture. The second concept on the other hand, emphasizes on the necessity of maintaining the uniqueness of the different cultures of the various ethnic groups even being a part of the overall American society. Salad, as a foodstuff, is made of different ingredients. After being prepared by these ingredients it comes out to be one single item, but still each of the ingredients can be identified separately. In fact, such a notion facilitated the emergence and spread of the concept of 'identity politics'. Conceptually it is close to the idea of multiculturalism, though the latter is used in a much wider perspective to include different types of people—immigrants, foreigners, deviants etc.

Pluralism points out the multi-dimensional and diverse character of a democratic society. In such a society, different groups and associations represent the various interests of the individuals and participate in the policy making process. Public policy is viewed as a result of mutual discussions and sharing of opinions between different autonomous groups. Famous American political scientist, Robert Dahl and Nelson Polsby ascribed to such views. They argue that this is essential for the success of democracy. Multiculturalism puts emphasis on a special kind of morality which aims to resolve the present and future conflicts between various cultural groups and minorities in the society.

4.2 Main Postulates of Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism claims that previous theories of liberal democracy put too much emphasis on individual liberty and have been culture-blind. Culture blindness has meant in reality the acceptance of the culture of the majority at the cost of those of the smaller groups and communities. State's policies on language, religion, culture, education etc. have also been pro-majority. The core of multiculturalism centres around the discriminations that minorities suffer as

their cultures are excluded from the public domain and the pressures they have to face to assimilate into the majority culture.

Multiculturalism argues that cultural differences have been the source of disadvantage and discrimination in many nations. This goes against both democratic theory and practice. When minorities and small communities are discriminated against, public policy assumes a non-democratic character.

Multiculturalism has also stated forcefully that the notion of formal equality—i.e., everybody is a citizen with equal rights—has tended to create an image of inclusionary and homogeneous public place. But the reality has been otherwise. In most societies, the principle of formal equality has worked as a cover-up principle to obliterate and ignore group differences. The assertion of formal equality has dictated in a subtle form the assimilation of all other groups into the dominant majoritarian cultural and political life. Will Kymlicka, one of the most prominent exponents of multiculturalism, explains the dilemma: "on one side, there is the need to accommodate difference by according group-specific rights on the ground that the accommodation of differences is the essence of true equality." On the other hand, there is the argument which suggests that "individual rights already allow for the accommodation of differences." Group-differentiated rights (such as territorial autonomy, veto powers, guaranteed representation in policy-making bodies, land claims, and language rights), argues Kymlicka, can help rectify this disadvantage by alleviating the vulnerability of minority cultures to majority decisions. Diverse and variegated cultures have been a common feature in the history of human society. The governing process, instead of erasing those diversities, should carefully preserve and promote the same. Appropriate systems of governance thus, need to be evolved to incorporate the minorities consociationally.

Liberalism has often argued that cultural diversity enriches individual life and society. Theorists of liberal democracy have put emphasis on cultural identity as the essence of individual and group life. Multiculturalism has, in a way, sought to redefine the conventional concept of liberty. In multi-cultural political theory, cultural community as against the individual, assumes centrality. Hence it is not

enough, argue the multiculturalists, to just have civil liberties and political rights. For the preservation of cultural way of life, priorities should be attached to group rights rather than individual rights.

Multiculturalism has both descriptive and normative connotations. As a descriptive term, it refers to cultural diversity arising from the existence within a society of two or more groups whose beliefs and practices generate a distinctive sense of collective identity. In the normative sense, multiculturalism implies a positive endorsement of communal diversity, based either on the right of different cultural groups to respect and recognition, or on the alleged benefits to the larger society of moral and cultural diversity. Multiculturalism thus acknowledges the importance of beliefs, values and ways of life in establishing self understanding and a sense of self-worth for individuals and groups alike.

Charles Taylor, a Canadian political scientist and a well-known advocate of multiculturalism, has drawn our attention to the challenges emerging out of the "new arrivals" in democratic societies. He has opened that contemporary democratic societies are by nature multicultural. In such a society, the forceful implementation of the principle of assimilation over the newly arrived cultural groups leads to the destruction of their unique cultural characteristics. Such a process is detrimental to democratic values. If a plural society wants to maintain its democratic character, it has to accept the cultural and ethnic diversities in society. To fulfil this condition, Taylor argues, radical changes should be brought in the method of representation of various social groups in a democratic political system.

On the basis of his researches on Canada Taylor focussed on the issue of the conflicts between English speaking Canadians and the French Canadians of Quebec. Both the groups try to highlight their social-cultural differences in various spheres of life. He has identified this very process as the challenge of the new arrivals, which, according to him, is gradually increasing in almost all the democracies of the world. As a result of worldwide international migration, every society has gradually become 'multicultural'. In such a situation, forceful assimilation is turning into an unsustainable process.

Will Kymlicka, has dealt elaborately with the problem of representation of different groups in a democracy in the famous work **Multicultural Citizenship : A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights (1995)**. What should be the basis for the representation of different groups?—their numerical strength within the total population or, any other special considerations. To search answers to such questions Kymlicka developed the theory of “mirror representation”. According to this theory, in the legislature the different cultural and ethnic groups will be represented by members belonging to those groups. Besides, other members of the legislature who do not belong to these groups, also have responsibility to represent the interests of the groups. To be precise, Kymlicka wants a new model of group-based representation in place of the individualist model of representation. Regarding the appropriate number of seats for a particular social group in the legislature, Kymlicka has mentioned of two possibilities—(a) number of seats for a group should be decided on the basis of its population in proportion to the total population—i.e. following the general principle of “mirror representation”; and (b) to reserve more seats if necessary for those social groups which are most marginalised. The first possibility, Kymlicka opines, is not always acceptable because its inherent meaning implies that only representatives from the same group (women representatives for women for example) can truly represent the interest of that group. This is a false notion. Efficient leadership is able to produce conciliation between the diverse interests of varied social groups. Such proposal is also not rational that peoples’ representatives will be accountable only to those persons whose interests they are representing in the legislature. If this proposal is put into practice, the process of representation of those different types of people who together form a ‘constituency’, will be hampered. It is not realistic to create separate constituencies for each of the groups and minority communities. According to Kymlicka, in a nation-state the people’s representatives should remain accountable to all the cultural groups. For that only can lead to the fulfilment of national interest and establishment of social justice.

Irish Young, an American social thinker has analysed multiculturalism by criticising the model of assimilation in the renowned work **Justice and the**

Politics of Difference (1990), Young argues that assimilation model creates a false notion that culture, values and norms of one particular group is the ideal and universal, and, therefore, all other groups are treated as 'deviant' or the 'other'. As a result, different social groups become victims of oppression. Democratic politics should do away with the trend. Our goal should be to help the oppressed so that they can maintain their own identity and position.

Isaiah Berlin's theory of pluralism also influenced many multiculturalists to justify a politics of difference. According to Berlin, there is no single, overriding conception of 'good life', but rather a number of competing conceptions : people in short, are bound to disagree about the ultimate ends of life. As far as individuals are concerned, compromises must be made between competing values and goals. As far as society is concerned, ways must be found to allow people with different moral and cultural beliefs to inhabit the same political space while maintaining peace and mutual respect.

Bhiku Parekh advanced an alternative basis for multiculturalism. According to Parekh, cultural diversity is actually a reflection of the dialectical interplay between human nature and culture. Although human beings are natural creatures, they are also culturally constituted in the sense that their attitudes, behaviours, and ways of life are shaped by the groups to which they belong. A recognition of the complexity of human nature, and of the fact that any culture expresses only a part of what it means to be truly human, provides the basis for a politics of recognition and thus for a viable form of multiculturalism.

4.3 Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has revealed the various dimensions of multiculturalism and its basic postulates. In short, the concept of multiculturalism brings out the drawbacks of the contemporary liberal democracies. In present day multicultural societies the democratic governance often sets up a kind of majority rule which tends to obliterate the identity of diverse cultural and ethnic groups. This is a problem in both Western societies and the countries of the East. For example, in a multicultural country like India, it is necessary to maintain the identity of various cultural groups for the realisation of democracy and social

justice. Democratic community today has immensely grown in size where various types of cultural groups live together. It is necessary to infuse a sense of security among small cultural groups in a multicultural society. People belonging to different cultures should be given due representation in the decision making bodies.

However, too much insistence on 'difference' and rejection of the prevalent norms may result in isolation and deprivation of certain minority groups. Those who reject the 'mainstream' culture and devote all energy to protect their own language and culture, may ultimately realize that they are unfit to find employment, business opportunities or professional avenues in society. It should also be remembered that 'mainstream' culture is not always the 'dominant' culture. It could be the product of interaction between different cultures.

In any case, multiculturalism, like democracy, has become the order of the day. A multicultural society that fails to cultivate the spirit of multiculturalism may eventually disintegrate. Fragmentation of Yugoslavia first into Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (1991-92) and later into Serbia, Montenegro (2006) and Kosovo (2008) is one such glaring example.

4.4 Bibliography

1. W. Kymlica, *Multicultural Citizenship : A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, 1995
2. Andrew Heywood, *Politics*, 2002
3. O. P. Gauba, *An Introduction to Political Theory*, 6th edition, 2013
4. A. Roy and M. Bhattachaya, *Political Theory : Ideas and Institutions*, 2005.

4.5 Model Questions

1. Trace the development of the concept of multiculturalism.
2. Define multiculturalism. Examine its basic postulates.
3. Discuss the relationship between liberalism & multiculturalism.

Unit : 1 □ Hegemony : Antonio Gramsci

Structure

1.1 Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 Hegemony, Civil Society and Strategy of Revolution

1.4 “Modern Prince” and the concept of Hegemony

1.5 Sample questions

1.1 Objectives

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

- (a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with an overview of Gramsci's concept of hegemony.
- (b) Gramsci's understanding of the interrelation of hegemony, civil society and strategy of revolution.
- (c) Gramsci on “Modern Prince” and its relation with hegemony.

1.2 Introduction

In this Unit the contributions of the great Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, who belongs to the pre World War II period, are discussed. Gramsci is generally considered as a major figure in what is commonly known as Western Marxism, a tradition in Marxism that originated in Western Europe, under the impact of the Russian Revolution, and which primarily of the founders of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) in 1921, combined in him the role of an activist and an intellectual. Learning from his own experience of and participation in the social, political and

cultural life of Italy during and after the end of World War I, Gramsci's alternative vision of Marxism was shaped by his concern for the following developments which he witnessed. First : the mounting crisis of Italian state and society, especially after Italy's defeat in the War, resulting in growing unrest among the labouring masses; the bankruptcy of the Italian Socialist Party in mobilizing the masses for a revolutionary alternative, particularly after the victory of the October Revolution in Russia in 1917; the rapidly growing influence of fascism and the ability of fascism to come to power in Italy in 1926 by manipulating the consciousness of the masses; the failure of the Italian Left, especially the PCI, to withstand the challenge of fascism. Gramsci developed his ideas in a highly complex and sophisticated form primarily in his *Prison Notebooks*, which he wrote between 1926 and 1937, after he was arrested following Mussolini's coming to power. In trying to explain how and why fascism triumphed in Italy by securing the consent of the masses through its ability to skillfully control the various components of the superstructure, namely, church, the educational institutions etc, which Gramsci broadly characterized as Civil Society, he disagreed fundamentally with an influential section within the PCI, led by Amadeo Bordiga. While for Gramsci, fascism in Italy had struck deep into the consciousness of the masses, warranting thereby the need for a cultural and ideological strategy to combat fascism on the level of superstructure, Bordiga wholly discounted this viewpoint and argued instead in favour of an insurrectionary strategy on the model of the October Revolution, the presumption being that fascism in Italy was basically a weak and unstable force without any popular support base. In the light of these considerations Gramsci developed certain key ideas in defence of his interpretation of an alternative vision of Marxism. The kind of Marxism that Gramsci developed is described by him as "philosophy of praxis" in his *Prison Notebooks*, and an active, interventionist role is attributed to will, subjectivity and consciousness, since he rejects the conventional Marxist understanding that consciousness is simply the product of the material world. A brief summary of his main ideas is given below.

1.3 Hegemony, Civil Society and Strategy of Revolution

Hegemony, for Gramsci, refers to the notion of intellectual and moral leadership of a class which is able to secure thereby the consent of the governed and which thus enables the hegemonic class to rule not necessarily through violence and coercion. This hegemony has been historically established in the West in course of the coming to power of the bourgeoisie, following the development of capitalism, whereby the rule of the bourgeoisie in the West has been able to legitimize itself in the eyes of the people. Hegemony primarily targets the institutions of the superstructure in the sense that by taking control of the mechanisms, which shape our mind and consciousness, the stability of political power is ensured. Hegemony, therefore, is a strategy of modern capitalism.

It is in this context that the question of Civil Society becomes crucial for Gramsci. While civil society generally has been termed as the realm of the private, as distinct from the realm of the public, thus associating the Civil Society generally with the sphere of private economic activities of individuals under capitalism, free from the control of the state, Gramsci, while not denying this understanding, widens the sphere of Civil Society by relating it to the superstructural institutions (i.e., family, church, educational and cultural institutions etc), which, notwithstanding their private nature, are not totally unrelated to the state. Hegemony, for Gramsci, focuses on Civil Society and thus reaches out to the masses through its control of the cultural and ideological institutions of the superstructure, resulting in the ability of capitalism to govern without resorting to domination and coercion as the primary strategy.

This understanding enables Gramsci to introduce a new perspective in the traditional Marxist understanding that the state is necessarily and exclusively a coercive institution and that it rules only through violence and coercion necessitating thereby the strategy of armed violence and insurrection for overthrowing the state. While Gramsci did not underrate the role of force and violence under capitalism, what he emphasized was that capitalism does not sustain itself by relying predominantly on coercion, but on consent, which is

secured through the establishment of hegemony in Civil Society. Thus, for Gramsci, the modern capitalist state is actually a combination of force and consent, coercion and hegemony, that is, state = political society (force) + civil society (consent). It is this new methodological understanding of State and Civil Society which explains Gramsci's unique understanding of the strategy of revolution. Modifying the traditional Marxist understanding that the road to socialism lies through armed insurrection and violent seizure of state power, the premise being that the state is an instrument of coercion in the hands of the bourgeoisie, Gramsci argued that this strategy would work only in those societies where there is almost complete absence of hegemony and thereby Civil Society. This, for instance, was the situation in Czarist Russia where "the state was everything, the civil society nothing", and where, as a consequence, the element of consent was virtually absent. Gramsci thus makes a distinction between what he describes as the "East" and the "West", which means that societies of the "East" are those where, historically, the Civil Society has not evolved and where the state rules predominantly through coercion, the element of hegemony being minimal; in contrast, Gramsci terms those societies as belonging to the category of the "West" where civil society has matured and, as a result, the state predominantly rules through hegemony (= consent). The implication of this distinction for Gramsci is extremely crucial. To wage a revolution in the "East" the strategy of military confrontation/armed insurrection would be appropriate, because a state based on coercion calls for a strategy of revolutionary violence for its overthrow, — a strategy that Gramsci describes as "the war of manœuvre (movement)". On the contrary, to launch a revolution in the "West" would mean taking into consideration the presence of civil society (i.e., in countries where capitalism has advanced) and since in these countries the state rules predominantly by securing the consent of the governed, a direct revolutionary assault on the state would not work. The state is here protected by the "trench" of civil society and the seizure of state power, therefore, would involve prior capturing of the civil society by establishing a counter hegemony in this realm, that is, the state being the fort, to capture it the trench surrounding it would have to be seized first. This would be a protracted battle, which would have to be fought on the level of

ideology and culture, a strategy that Gramsci describes as the "war of position". Fascism in Italy, Gramsci argued, could not be defeated simply by revolutionary violence without addressing the question of hegemony.

In this connection two clarifications are necessary. First, Gramsci, of course, did not contrapose force and consent, since they are two elements of the modern state, and he also makes it clear that ultimately it is the military factor (the element of force) which becomes decisive. This position of Gramsci has, however been contested by scholars like Perry Anderson, for example, who believes that Gramsci, in his espousal of the concept of hegemony, underestimated the role of force and violence underlying the foundation of the capitalist state, while focusing on how the bourgeoisie sustains itself by adopting a hegemonic strategy. However, the Gramscian argument is that he does not universalize a particular strategy irrespective of all societies. Second, if hegemony in the true sense means a kind of intellectual and moral leadership which is consciously accepted by the people, fascism in that sense was not hegemonic proper. Through its rhetoric and manipulative skills it could take over the institutions of civil society and appeared as a hegemonic force but it was actually "domination without hegemony", a phenomenon that Gramsci describes as a "passive revolution" whereby the slogans and rhetoric of revolution are appropriated in order to scuttle any real revolution in the long run. The essence of "passive revolution" is revolution from above, which stops short of ushering in any real revolution from below. By way of illustration he refers to how nationalist leaders like Garibaldi and his Action Party in Italy failed to mobilize the Italian peasantry and thereby carry out any true agrarian revolution while acting as one of the leaders of the Italian Risorgimento (Italian unification) which took place in 1871. Thus the Risorgimento, which was a revolution from above, produced a weak Italian state which was not connected with the ordinary masses. This is also how the formation of the German nation state took place under Bismarck. In all such cases of "passive revolution" massive structural changes took place in the concerned societies but without engaging the ordinary masses, since these were acts of "domination without hegemony". The complexity and sophistication of Gramsci's understanding proves that it is

undeniable that he not only broadened the notion of Civil Society but also widened the narrow understanding of the State, resulting in an expanded understanding of the conventional Marxist understanding of the State.

In this connection Gramsci focuses on the role of the intellectuals in the battle for hegemony. The intellectuals being in charge of building the mindset of the masses on the level of ideology and culture, they play a very important role in moulding the consciousness of the people. Accordingly, he makes a distinction between traditional and organic intellectuals, the understanding being that "traditional intellectuals" perform this function for professional reasons only, without being committed towards any cause or ideology, serving thereby all regimes in a professional way. But Gramsci's concern being the accomplishment of a workers' revolution for the overthrow of the bourgeois state, he focuses on the importance of "organic intellectuals", who are committed to the cause of revolution and would under all circumstances stand by the side of the working class. They alone, Gramsci explains, would be able to uphold the cause of the proletariat and thereby play a crucial role in the workers' struggle for hegemony.

1.4 "Modern Prince" and the Concept of Hegemony

Gramsci was a thinker as well as an activist and he was the General Secretary of the PCI when he was arrested in 1926. Consequently, his vision of Marxism had a strong focus on the idea of a revolutionary party in a new perspective. He related his idea to the notion of hegemony and his arguments imply that as against bourgeois hegemony the battle for an alternative hegemony would have to be led by a new kind of Communist Party, which would not act simply as the leader of the working class but as an intellectual and moral leader symbolizing the "national popular collective consciousness" of the entire society. Such a party, according to Gramsci, would be destined to play the role of Machiavelli's Prince and so Gramsci describes it as the "Modern Prince". Just as Machiavelli projected the image of a Prince of the future under whose hegemonic leadership Italy would emerge as a socially and morally integrated nation, similarly, for Gramsci, the Communist Party would have to strive for establishing

itself as a real hegemonic force in Italy of his time, which would not be guided by the spirit of domination.

1.5 Sample Questions :

Long questions :

1. Explain Gramsci's understanding of revolutionary strategy in the context of his concept of hegemony.

Medium questions :

1. Analyse how Gramsci provides an expanded understanding of the Marxian concept of state.

Short questions :

1. What is meant by "war of position" ?
2. What is meant by "passive revolution" ?

Select readings :

- A. Tom Bottomore et al (eds) : *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*. Second edition (Oxford : Blackwell, 1991). The entries on "Gramsci" and "Hegemony".
- B. L.Kolakowski : *Main Currents of Marxism*. Vol III (Oxford & New York : Oxford University Press, 1978).
- C. David McLellan : *Marxism after Marx. An Introduction*. Indian edition (London & Basingstoke, 1979).
- D. Martin Carnoy : *The State and Political Theory* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1984)
- E. Joseph D. Femia : *Gramsci's Political Thought* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1987).

Unit : 2 □ Ideology : Louis Althusser

Structure

2.1 Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Althusser's Method

2.4 On Ideology

2.5 Ideology and the State

2.6 Sample questions

2.1 Objectives

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

- (a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with an overview of Althusser's concept of ideology.
 - (b) Althusser's method.
 - (c) Althusser's understanding of ideology.
 - (d) Althusser on ideology and state.
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2.2 Introduction

In this Unit the contribution of one of the most wellknown representatives of post-World War II French Marxism, namely, Louis Althusser, is discussed. Like Gramsci, Althusser is also noted as a theorist of the superstructure and a staunch opponent of any deterministic understanding of Marxism. But, methodologically, Gramsci and Althusser represent two quite distinct traditions in twentieth century Marxism. While Gramsci, together with Lukács, and followed by Merleau Ponty and Sartre, represents the humanist tradition in Marxism, their understanding

being largely anchored in Marxism's Hegelian roots, with emphasis on such Hegelian categories as consciousness, subjectivity etc, Althusser provides a structuralist interpretation of Marxism, which directly questions the rationale of subjectivity, consciousness and humanism in the interpretation of Marx. Althusser, who termed Marxism as "theoretical antihumanism", conceptualised Marxism as a science, firmly embedded in Dialectical and Historical Materialism. The Althusserian interpretation rejects the Hegelian heritage of Marxism as well as any deterministic or empiricist understanding of Marxism as a science. Althusser's structuralist interpretation of Marxism, developed under the influence of Freud and structuralist linguistics, opened up new horizons in twentieth century Marxism by developing a new method of studying Marxism through the development of such key concepts as Overdetermination, and by providing an altogether new understanding of state and ideology.

While focusing on the autonomy of superstructure, and thereby on ideology, he aimed at replacing the emphasis on man, consciousness, alienation etc found in the humanist Marxism of many of his French contemporaries (i.e., Jean Paul Sartre, Merleau Ponty, Roger Garaudy in the 1960s) by science and structure, derived from what he considered to be the writings of "mature Marx", namely, *Capital*, for instance. The writings in which Althusser elaborated his ideas are *For Marx* (a collection of essays), *Reading Capital* (written jointly with E. Balibar) and his essay "On Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses".

To understand Althusser's Marxism, especially his concept of ideology, it is, therefore, essential to keep in mind the following : (a) Althusser is uncompromisingly critical of the kind of the tradition of humanist Marxism that flourished in Europe in the 1950s and 1960s after the end of World War II, with emphasis on categories like subjectivity, will and consciousness, two major events providing the impetus to humanist Marxism being first, the discovery of the early writings of Marx and, second, the impact of Destalinization on European Marxism, in the wake of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956. Consequently, Gramsci and Althusser represent two altogether different traditions in twentieth century Marxism. (b) Althusser's defence of science and structure

thus questions the Hegelian anchorage of the tradition of humanist Marxism and builds itself up on an entirely different set of premises, derived from structuralism, a methodology which is opposed to philosophical idealism's focus on subjectivity and consciousness. Structuralism argues that meaning is not constituted by the words expressed by the subject; rather it is the invisible, impersonal structure of the language which constitutes the meaning. In place of the autonomy of the subject, it is the autonomy of the structure, then, which is the focal point of structuralism, the implication being that the human subject and his consciousness are framed by the parameters of the structure of production, which constitutes the essence of Historical Materialism. For Althusser, this is the method of science, as found in the mature writings of Marx. It is on the basis of this basic principle that Althusser has developed his version of structuralist Marxism. Below a summary of his views concerning Method, Ideology and State is given.

2.3 Althusser's Method

Rejecting the Hegelian notion of Totality which claims that particulars are simply the expressions of the universal (i.e., Spirit/Absolute/Idea), Althusser argues that the superstructure is not a simple expression of the economic base, and thus the notion of any determinist understanding of Marxism is dismissed. For him the terrain of the superstructure is not only autonomous but also a complex of contradictions as manifest in its multiple layers. Thus, for him, the superstructural reality being complex and manifold, it has to be explained not as an effect of economic contradictions, but with reference to the plurality of contradictions in the realm of the superstructure itself. Reality, therefore, is to be explained in terms of a plurality of factors, a phenomenon which Althusser calls Overdetermination, as different from determination of the superstructure by the base in the traditional understanding of Marxism. This autonomous realm of the superstructure, characterized by manifold relations of contradictions, is known as the structure in Althusser's Marxism and it is in this structure that the production relations of capitalism are reproduced, making the structure necessarily a vehicle of capitalist class interests.

The method that Althusser adopts in his understanding of how scientific knowledge of reality is attained is to be understood in the context of his rejection of the claims of humanism as well as empiricism. Thus, humanism, with its emphasis on class consciousness, subjectivity and will, found for instance, in the early writings of Marx, and in the tradition of Marxism, that flourished through Sartre, Merlau-Ponty and Garaudy, is dismissed by Althusser. The humanist focus of Marxism, according to Althusser, attributes the most important role to such categories as the human essence, class consciousness of the proletariat etc. Empiricism, which makes no distinction between knowledge and the object of knowledge, is also rejected by Althusser, since, for him, knowledge cannot be acquired through direct observation of the object. Knowledge, according to Althusser, is a theoretical exercise which has to be worked on the object of knowledge, and Althusser calls it "theoretical practice". This, according to him, consists of three elements called Generalities I, Generalities II and Generalities III. Generalities I are the raw materials of a given discipline, its ideas and concepts, the immediate object of knowledge. These have to be worked over by means of a theoretical process of scientific abstraction, grounded in a conceptual framework, described as "problematic". This is Generalities II. The output of this exercise is the generation of scientific knowledge, which Althusser describes as Generalities III. Through this process Generalities I ("concrete-real") is transformed into Generalities III ("concrete-in-thought") and attainment of knowledge of reality is possible. In empiricism knowledge is supposed to be derived from Generalities I ("concrete-real") itself, since it does not recognize the distinction between knowledge ("concrete-in-thought") and object of knowledge ("concrete-real") and this is what is contested by Althusser. In his opinion, this is the method that Marx adopted in his "mature writings", namely, in *Capital* and this is what distinguished the "mature Marx" from the "early Marx", the early Marx's writings being "humanist", as distinct from the "scientific" writings of the "mature Marx". It is in this sense that Althusser characterizes Marxism as "theoretical antihumanism".

2.4 On Ideology

Althusser rejects the traditional Marxist understanding that ideology is a kind of false consciousness or that it is simply a superstructural phenomenon, a reflection of the economic base. The Althusserian understanding conceptualizes the domain of ideology as an autonomous sphere, to be viewed in terms of its own structure. Consequently, he makes a very important pronouncement, namely, "Ideologies interpellate individuals as Subjects". The implication of this statement is threefold. First : ideology is not simply a matter of consciousness, being authored by the human subject. Second : ideology has a material existence and this relates to practices as governed by certain procedures and these are themselves defined by what Althusser describes as a material ideological apparatus, as manifest in the production of ideas through a vast complex of social, cultural, religious institutions, their customs, rituals and practices. This constitutes the domain of ideology as an autonomous structure which, Althusser argues, shapes the individuals, since they are born in ideologies, and thereby the individual is transformed into a subject of ideology. This implies that ideology is not a product; rather it exists on its own, and thereby it constitutes and interpellates (hails) the individuals as subjects. Third : ideologies are superstructural vehicles through which the capitalist production relations are reproduced and thereby articulated in the form of a kind of cultural consciousness which defines and moulds the individual.

2.5 Ideology and the State

Althusser provides a highly innovative understanding of the Marxist theory of the state by expanding the notion of relative autonomy and relating it to ideology. Unlike the traditional Marxist understanding which argues that seizure of state power by the revolutionary forces permanently settles the issue of political power, since it now fortifies their position securely, Althusser makes a conceptual distinction between state power and state apparatus. He argues that seizure of state power by the revolutionary forces does not necessarily fortify the position of the

revolutionary forces, because he makes a distinction between state power and state apparatus, and the latter, he says, may very well outlive the capture of state power. Althusser, then, makes a distinction between Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), meaning thereby that RSAs comprise the police, military etc while ISAs are constituted by a plurality of ideological structures represented by the educational system, the family, the legal institutions, the various cultural institutions and organizations etc which act as vehicles or bearers of the ideology of the dominant class and which continue to survive in the mind and consciousness of the people who were subjected to their ideological conditioning for years. Consequently, mere seizure of state power does not at all settle the issue of political power, because, unless this distinction is kept in mind, both the RSAs and the ISAs will outlive the act of seizure of state power and the outlook of repression (RSAs) and bourgeois world view (ISAs) will continue to threaten the proletarian state from within, despite the change of hands. For Althusser, it is the ISAs which become especially important, and this is explained by his understanding of the autonomous domain of ideology. Consequently, he refers to the ISAs as the emerging site of bitter class struggles which need to be waged in the wake of a socialist revolution. It is in this context that he refers to Lenin's concern to revolutionize the educational ISA, simply to make it possible for the Russian proletariat, who had seized State power in the October Revolution of 1917, to ensure the transition to socialism.

2.6 Sample Questions

Long questions :

1. Explain Althusser's understanding of ideology.

Medium questions :

1. How is Althusser's rejection of humanism related to his deince of structuralism ?

Short questions :

1. What is meant by RSA ?

2. What do you mean by "overdetermination"?

Select Readings :

- A. David McLellan : *Marxism after Marx. An Introduction*. Indian edition (London & Basingstoke : 1979).
- B. Tom Bottomore et al (eds) : *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*. The entries on "Althusser" and "Structuralism". Second edition (Oxford : Blackwell, 1991).
- C. Martin Carnoy : *The State and Political Theory* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1984)
- D. John Lechte : *Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers : From Structuralism to Postmodernity* (Oxford & New York : 1994)

Unit : 3 □ Instrumentalist view of State : Ralph Miliband

Structure

3.1 Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Miliband on the Capitalist State

3.4 Sample Questions

3.1 Objectives

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

- (a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with an overview of Miliband's view of state.
- (b) Miliband's understanding of the capitalist state.

3.2 Introduction

In this Unit the contributions of Ralph Miliband, a very prominent British Marxist, belonging to the post World War II period, are discussed. Miliband is particularly wellknown for his analysis of the modern capitalist state and his scepticism about the claims of the modern liberal democratic state in the West. Miliband's contribution to Marxist political theory generally refers to his examination of the state under modern capitalism in terms of the class interests of capitalism, popularly known as his defence of the instrumentalist view of the state. This led him to be engaged in a critical encounter with the structuralist view of the state under capitalism, as advanced by Nicos Poulantzas.

Miliband is one of those very few Marxist writers of this period who considered the state to be the most crucial arena of struggle for political power.

This is largely explained by the fact that he was an uncompromising critic of the capitalist state and motivated by the idea that socialism, notwithstanding its global collapse, was the only possible alternative to the state power of capitalism. Consequently, as E.M. Wood has pointed out, that the distinctiveness of Ralph Miliband's intellectual style has always been essential to his substance and to the qualities that have continued to be such a vital resource for the socialist left, making his death such a serious blow. His ideas represented a programme which meant a specific conception of the task confronting socialist intellectuals even after the collapse of the socialist world in 1991. Thus, "the ultimate purpose of counter-hegemonic struggles," Miliband wrote in *Socialist Register* in 1990, "is to make socialism the common sense of the epoch", meaning thereby that it involves two things: first, "a radical critique of the prevailing social order", and, second, "an affirmation that an entirely different social order ... is not only desirable ... but possible".

Motivated by this spirit, Miliband developed his views on the capitalist state in *The State in Capitalist Society* (1969) and it is on this issue that he became later engaged in what has come to be recognized as one of the most wellknown debates on the nature of the capitalist state, namely, the Miliband-Poulantzas debate. In this debate Miliband's position is generally regarded as a defence of instrumentalism against Poulantzas's advocacy of structuralism in the analysis of the state. A summary of Miliband's views on the capitalist state is given below.

3.3 Miliband on the Capitalist State

Miliband's position on the state has to be understood as a critique of the prevalent pluralist theories of the state which, as E.M. Wood has pointed out, exposed the state as a concentration of social power and the state thus re-emerged from behind the mystifications of "the political system" and "political behaviour" to become a, if not the, central theme of political studies. The pluralist/behavioural orientation in the study of politics seeks to explain the nature of the modern capitalist state in terms of a plurality of factors, resulting in a concealed view of the essence of capitalist exploitation. To cite Wood again, "Marxist historians like E. P. Thompson have contributed greatly to the denaturalisation of capitalism, and

to the affirmation of other human possibilities, by tracing its history back to its contested origins, to the confrontation of capitalist principles with other, resistant practices and values. And some Marxist philosophers have laid a foundation for a socialist epistemology and ethics. But Miliband stands virtually alone in his systematic effort to understand the political terrain of capitalism, to work out a strategy of socialist struggle within it, and to analyse the nature of class and state power in capitalist society — the barriers which it erects against a more humane and democratic social order as well as the resources and agencies available to overcome them." Miliband believed that socialism is an objective that cannot be achieved in a single life-time. It should perhaps be seen, he wrote in his last book, *Socialism for a Sceptical Age*, as a striving toward a goal rather than the goal itself and his vision of a socialist project is informed not by a hint of pessimism but by a steady conviction that the goal is worth striving for and can be finally achieved. Thus, his contribution to Marxist political theory is to be viewed in the context of his uncompromising critique of the capitalist state as well as his unflinching defence of the values and principles of socialism which he characterized as democracy, egalitarianism and cooperation.

Miliband's position on the capitalist state is generally considered as an instrumentalist viewpoint, the best illustration of which is his book *The State in Capitalist Society* (1969). The central arguments underlying Miliband's thesis are ; one : in the advanced capitalist societies of the West the state is necessarily an instrument in the hands of the ruling class, because it is the representatives of this class which control the different institutions of the state, namely, the government, parliament, civil service or bureaucracy, police, legal system and armed forces. Those who occupy these positions Miliband calls the state elite. The state elite is made up of Cabinet Ministers, top judges, top civil servants and those in the top ranks of the Police and Army. In his opinion the members of the state elite are predominantly drawn from the ranks of the upper class and upper middle class, landed aristocracy and highly paid professions and this is how the state acts in the service of the capitalist class. For example, Miliband points out that between 1889 and 1949 more than 60% of cabinet members in the US government were businessmen. Thus, he points out that most of the time it is not necessary for the capitalist class to intervene, since the state will nearly always act in the interests

of the capitalist class. Two : Miliband does, however, admit that from time to time concessions can be won by the working class such as the Welfare state in Britain. But the fact is, he points out, that those who get into the seat of power sooner or later get themselves inextricably linked up with the ruling class and its interests, resulting in the emergence of a state which acts as an instrument of capitalism.

The class origin of the ruling elite, therefore, which, in turn, defines its class position, according to Miliband, is the key to the understanding of state power. Even Parliament, which may have a few representatives of the working class, is ultimately controlled by the ruling interests of capitalism. Miliband's position was, however, contested by Nicos Poulantzas, leading to the Miliband-Poulantzas debate in the 1970s.

3.4 Sample Questions

Long questions :

1. Examine Miliband's "instrumentalist" understanding of state.

Medium questions :

1. What is the importance of class in Miliband's view of state?

Short questions :

1. What is the central argument of Miliband in his defence of instrumentalism?
2. Why is Miliband opposed to liberalism ?

Select Readings :

- A. E.M. Wood : "The Common Sense of Socialism" , in *Radical Philosophy*, 2 April, 2004.
- B. Martin Carnoy : *The State and Political Theory* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1984)
- C. Robin Blackburn (ed) : *Ideology in Social Science. Readings in Critical Social Theory* (New York : Random House, 1973).

Unit : 4 □ Structuralist view of State : Nicos Poulantzas

Structure

- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Poulantzas on the Capitalist State and his debate with Miliband
- 4.4 Sample Questions

4.1 Objectives

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

- (a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with an overview of Poulantzas's view of the state.
- (b) Poulantzas on the capitalist state and his debate with Miliband.

4.2 Introduction

In this Unit the views of Nicos Poulantzas, a very distinguished figure in the aftermath of World War II, are presented. Originally hailing from Greece, but later exiled in France, Poulantzas, like Althusser, is considered as a major representative of structuralist Marxism in the twentieth century. Poulantzas is primarily known for his debate with Ralph Miliband on the understanding of the modern capitalist state. Commonly known as the Miliband-Poulantzas debate, methodologically speaking, this was a critical engagement between the instrumentalist (Miliband) and the structuralist (Poulantzas) position. To be more precise, while in Miliband the emphasis was on class, in Poulantzas the focus was on the relations which constitute the structure of the capitalist state.

The context of the debate was Poulantzas's critique of Miliband's *The State*

in *Capitalist Society* (1969), which was published in a wellknown British journal *New Left Review*, No.58 in 1969 under the title "The Problem of the Capitalist State". This led to a reply from the side of Miliband in the same Journal in its No. 59 issue in 1970, carrying the heading "The Capitalist State — Reply to Nicos Poulantzas". While the key issues of the debate centred around these presentations, following the publication of Miliband's aforesaid book, Miliband further elaborated his position vis a vis Poulantzas in 1973 in an article "Poulantzas and the Capitalist State" in No.82 of *New Left Review*. Meanwhile, Poulantzas's book *Political Power and Social Classes*, originally published in French, had been translated in English in 1973 and in 1976 in No. 95 issue of *New Left Review* he wrote another article entitled "The Capitalist State : A Reply to Miliband and Laclau", elaborating his position.

Methodologically speaking, Poulantzas is generally known as a structuralist, influenced as he was by Louis Althusser, the distinguished French Marxist, often regarded as a pioneer of the structuralist school of Marxism. Accordingly, following the Althusserian outlook, Poulantzas emphasized, in place of the traditional Marxist argument, that the state was an instrument in the hands of the capitalist state, the idea that the capitalist state operates in an autonomous terrain, represented by a complex structure of institutions the working of which is not to be explained simply as a derivative of the position of the class which controls the economy. Thus, Poulantzas, quite in line with the structuralist viewpoint that the relations that constitute the structure are to be treated autonomously, provides a sophisticated critique of Miliband and a defence of his own position. A summary of Poulantzas's position on the capitalist state and his debate with Miliband is given below.

4.3 Poulantzas on the Capitalist State and his Debate with Miliband

Poulantzas's central argument can be termed as a kind of exercise in what may be generally considered as structural determinism. It means, to put it very simply, that the state would necessarily always operate in the interests of the

capitalist state not because of the fact that those who control the state apparatus are representatives of the capitalist class but because the institutional mechanisms of the capitalist state are organized in such a way that they make it imperative for the rulers to run the state in the interests of capitalism. The autonomy of the structure thus becomes decisive in Poulantzas, while the emphasis on class origins of the rulers, that is, the human, the subjectivist, dimension underlying the working of the capitalist state gets dismissed. This is what reminds one of how Althusser described his structuralist outlook, more specifically, the structuralist understanding of Marxism, as a kind of "theoretical antihumanism". The contrast with Miliband thus is quite obvious. In contrast to Miliband, Poulantzas argues that it might be possible for people from humble backgrounds to occupy the state's elite positions but it would make no difference, since the state would still operate in the interests of capitalism. For example, even if a Left Wing government comes to power, it cannot just implement those policies, because it will be under pressure from bureaucracy, police, the army not to carry them out, as they would hit their class interests. Thus, if the capitalist class thinks that its interests are under threat it can simply withdraw its capital from circulation and invest it elsewhere, with the result that economic activity will slow down, people will lose their jobs, and unemployment will soar along with poverty. Consequently, the government would not take any course of action that vitally affects the interests or offends the sensibilities of the capitalist class.

The actions of the state are also constrained by the state itself. This sounds confusing but it is not. The play of the autonomy of the structure is manifest when one element of the state can constrain what another element of the state might do in retaliation. Thus, if a Left Wing government comes to power and decides to push through its reforms then it might find that it is threatened to be overthrown by the military or a section of the military. This is, more or less, what happened in Chile in 1973, notwithstanding the fact that the CIA had a hand in the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende.

This being the central thrust of Poulantzas's structuralist understanding of the

state, his analytical understanding of the autonomy of the structure of the state now deserves attention. This involves two main propositions. First: he points out, contesting Miliband, that the state is necessarily controlled by the representatives of any homogenous capitalist class. In his opinion, the capitalist class is now divided in a number of power blocs and, consequently, what actually happens is that the state is actually controlled not necessarily by the capitalist class as whole but by its fractions. Second : this, however, in no way makes the capitalist state unstable or weak, because the logic of class conflict in society, together with the class interests of capitalism, is mediated through the complex structures of the state whereby the state is objectively bound to be geared to maintain balance and stability in defence of capitalism.

What Miliband rejects, however, is this structural determinism of Poulantzas. His two main criticisms are : first, it is not simply enough to say that the state will always act in the interests of the ruling class. For example, if a radical Left wing government comes to power would the state continue to act in the interests of the ruling class, making no difference in the situation ? Second, Poulantzas's argument provides legitimacy to the positions of those who believe that there is no distinction between fascism and liberal democracy, since Poulantzas's understanding logically implies that there is no meaning in the struggle for reforms or for an alternative government within the limitations of parliamentary democracy. So, even a progressive government with an agenda for major reforms would be of no help, for it is bound to be ultimately swallowed up by the structural constraints of the capitalist state.

Scholars like Ernesto Laclau and Bob Jessop have criticized Poulantzas particularly for his abstraction of the state from the human, the class, factor, which provides the key to the understanding of capitalism. To be more exact, if the allegation of Poulantzas against Miliband is that of class determinism, the objection against Poulantzas is that of an abstract structural determinism.

Nevertheless we should bear in mind that this debate continues to have its

significance today. In the age of globalization when the actions of the state are constrained by outside factors, for example, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the WTO (World Trade Organization) and as they to a large extent determine the policy for many Third World governments, in the face of which the Governments are quite often helpless, the warning of Poulantzas is not out of place. Again, it is precisely for this reason that the struggle for reforms, electing a government which ideologically would put up a stand against the forces of global capitalism, makes Miliband's position no less relevant.

However, despite this initial debate between Miliband and Poulantzas both the writers modified their understanding in their later writings. Miliband, for instance, admitted that the instrumentalist stance obscured the more complex understanding that the state, indeed, was autonomous of the ruling class, since factors like pressures exercised by the economically dominant class and the structural constraints imposed by the mode of production are realities that cannot be ignored. Similarly, Poulantzas in his last writings viewed the state simply not just as a frozen structure, existing almost like an abstraction. He now viewed the state as a site of class struggle without any institutional fixity, arguing thereby that the state would have to be viewed in terms of the dynamics of class struggle, the thrusts and direction of which remain open and undefined.

Although the Miliband-Poulantzas debate took place in the 1970s, highlighting the relevance of the Marxist perspective in the understanding of the modern capitalist state, subsequently two other scholars took up the issues arising out of this controversy, emphasizing thereby the relevance of this subject. Thus Fred Block, broadly sharing the position of Miliband, points out that the capitalist class, despite its occasional readiness to enact some reforms, ultimately is incapable of going against its own interests, since in the long run the state is the custodian of the interests of capital. Similarly Bob Jessop, writing broadly in the light of the position represented by the later Poulantzas, views the state as a strategic site traversed by class struggle without any pre-given formal or substantive unity. What he espouses is that the capitalist state has to be viewed in terms of the strategy and dynamics of class relations which shape its functioning without,

however, any definitive or determinate structure.

To conclude, the Marxist perspective demands transcendence of the rather common understanding that the state is simply an instrument in the hands of the ruling class. Marx himself revised his earlier understanding and introduced the 'relative autonomy' thesis. The subsequent debates that took place simply confirm its enduring relevance.

4.4 Sample Questions

Long questions :

1. Write a note on the Miliband-Poulantzas debate.

Medium questions :

1. What are the criticisms of Miliband against Poulantzas's structuralism ?

Short questions :

1. What is meant by "structural determinism?"
2. What was the shift in Poulantzas's later writings on state ?

Select Readings :

- A. Martin Carnoy : *The State and Political Theory* ((Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1984))
- B. Robin Blackburn (ed) : *Ideology in Social Science. Readings in Critical Social Theory* (New York : Random House, 1973)
- C. Colin Hay, Michael Lister, David Marsh (eds.) : *The State : Theories and Issues* (Hampshire : Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)
- D. Bob Jessop : *Nicos Poulantzas. Marxist Theory and Political Strategy* (Basingstoke and New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 1985)

Unit : 1 □ Postmodernism

Structure

- 1.1 Objectives**
- 1.2 Introduction**
- 1.3 Rise of Postmodernism**
- 1.4 The Lyotard-Habermas debate**
- 1.5 Debate between Postmodernism and Marxism**
- 1.6 Sample Questions**

1.1 Objectives

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

- (a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with a broad overview of postmodernism.
- (b) The rise of postmodernism.
- (c) The Lyotard-Habermas debate.
- (d) Debate between Postmodernism and Marxism.

1.2 Introduction

In Unit 1 the basic tenets of postmodernism are outlined in the historical context of how it emerged in the late twentieth century as a radical response to European modernity which took shape under the aegis of the Enlightenment in the 18th century. After briefly explaining the constituent elements of modernity, it is examined how postmodernism, expressing a mood of anger and discontent vis a vis modernity's emphasis on ideas like universality, reason, progress, totality etc completely rejects the idea of a "grand narrative", and instead defends an

alternative position the focus of which is on fragmentation, deconstruction, absence of closure, microidentities and localism. The reader is given to understand that postmodernism emerged in a very specific historical context in the 1980s, the philosophical influence of Friedrich Nietzsche being quite decisive in the shaping of postmodernism. It is then explained why postmodernism rejects traditional liberalism as well as Marxism as grand narratives of modernity and thereby dismisses them. This is followed by a summary of the Habermas-Lyotard debate in the 1980s in which Habermas contested the orthodox postmodern defence of Lyotard and put forward his defence of the proposition that the Enlightenment remained an "unfinished project". Finally, an outline of the debate between Marxism and postmodernism is provided.

Postmodernism is an extremely radical doctrine which has flourished in social sciences in the last decades of the twentieth century. It has emerged as a critique of the idea of modernity, which constitutes the foundation of Western thought and ideas, based on science, reason, progress etc. Postmodernism questions the attempt of European modernity to universalize these notions and aims at replacing the notion of modernity by a totally different perspective which considers these attributes of modernity pejoratively. This in no way suggests that postmodernism wants to revive premodern, conservative ideas. What it contests is the universalist claims of European modernity which were most powerfully legitimized by the Enlightenment. The European notion of modernity expresses a mood of optimism and power, the foundations of which were laid down by the scientific revolutions of the 17th century, followed by the Age of Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century. It universalized the idea of progress latent in history, emphasized the idea of reason, glorified the outlook of empiricism and thereby established very firmly the idea that, equipped with the power of scientific reasoning, all phenomena in nature and society can be subjected to certain universal scientific principles. This all-pervasive, totalizing claim of scientific reasoning thus aimed at schematizing everything in a framework, a kind of cage, which postmodernism describes as a grand narrative or a metanarrative and which it contests. Its obvious implication was legitimation of the kind of market society

based on the principles of liberalism which was taking shape in Europe. Postmodernism's principal contention is that this so-called universalization of the claims of modernity were nothing but the universalization of the Western, the European, man, a justification of its universal claims of domination over the rest of the world. In other words, the notion of European modernity sanctified and certified the claims of the European man in such a way that it eliminated the idea of dissent, difference and criticism, because the very idea of universalization precluded this possibility. This meant the complete erasure of freedom, autonomy, plurality and criticality. Modernity thus becomes synonymous with domination, control and repression. Postmodernism, therefore, celebrates precisely those elements which are opposed to those of modernity. Consequently, postmodernism rejects the idea of any meta or grand narrative, any notion of essentialism or universalism or any kind of totalizing claim. It has its focus on fragments, localism, microidentities and it does not believe in any kind of boundary or closure. Instead of the universalist or essentialist perspective of modernity postmodernism, then, espouses the cause of absolute relativism. Since postmodernism does not believe in any essentialist or universalist construction of any meaning or concept, it looks for multiple or pluralist versions of any word, meaning or concept by going beyond the given or accepted sense of any word or expression. This search for a number of hidden meanings by questioning the given meaning of something is known as deconstruction, a perspective explained by the postmodern outlook.

1.3 Rise of Postmodernism

The rise of postmodernism in the 1980s and its rapidly growing influence can be explained broadly with reference to certain sociological and philosophical factors. Historical : (a) Despite the claims of progress and stability, made by the liberal democracies of the West, in the post War period it began to be experienced that capitalism's track record was highly deceptive. Not only was it unable to solve its crisis but it also promoted war, oppression, domination and control, as manifest for instance, in the Vietnam War in the 60s. This led to growing scepticism about the universalist claims of reason and progress made by the West.

(b) The collapse of Soviet socialism in the 1990s and the track record of Stalinism in the erstwhile USSR shattered the hopes of the Left, many of whom now began to argue that both capitalism and socialism were bereft of any universalist appeal, both having been seriously discredited. This led to the abandonment of ideologies and any kind of macro framework, paving the way for microidentities.

Philosophical : the influence of the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche, the controversial German nihilist philosopher of the 19th century, who questioned the accepted foundations of European thought in the sense that he was deeply sceptical of the universalist claims of any concept and strongly advocated the notion of absolute relativism. As opposed to the idea of any positive affirmation, Nietzsche stood by the idea of radical negation. Influenced by all these factors postmodernism thus assumed a character which also became expressive of the ideas of nihilism and anarchy, critical as it was of any notion of universality and essentialism. Postmodernism thus claimed that it questioned the so-called idea of humanism, which was nothing but concealed domination perpetrated by the Western man in the name of universality and this constituted the crux of modernity.

1.4 The Lyotard-Habermas Debate :

The philosophy of postmodernism was first systematically outlined in the early 1980s in a report prepared by Francois Lyotard, a distinguished French philosopher, under the title *The Postmodern Condition*. The philosophy of postmodernism, however, was already emerging as a powerful doctrine, as evident in the writings of influential French philosophers like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. While Foucault argued that the world was a play of power in the sense that power was a network that prevailed everywhere in society without any distinct location, either economic or political, Derrida put forward the idea of deconstruction, pleading for a search for multiple meanings underlying words, concepts and practices, instead of accepting the universality of any meaning. All these came up for a critical review by a very eminent German philosopher, namely, Juergen Habermas, in the 1980s and which was questioned

by Lyotard immediately thereafter, who strongly defended the thesis of postmodernism and continued to question the claims of modernity, anchored in certain essentialist, universalist and foundationalist principles. This has come to be known as the Lyotard - Habermas debate. While Habermas agreed generally with the postmodern criticism that an uncritical acceptance of the European notion of modernity would lead to problems, he was not prepared to reject in principle the idea of modernity, since, for him, the Enlightenment idea of modernity remained "an unfinished project". Thus, he observed that he agreed with the critics of modernity that in the name of scepticism and scientific reasoning modernity had certainly eroded the freedom and autonomy of the individual in the fields of arts and sciences but modernity itself is not necessarily a pejorative concept. The arguments of Habermas may be summarized as follows :

(a) The postmodern rejection of the idea of modernity wholly and completely ignores the importance of the distinction between premodernity and modernity. This would mean simply a denial of the contribution that modernity has made in questioning the values of the premodern era, which were predominantly steeped in conservatism and blind faith. (b) Postmodernism fails to distinguish between the promise and the practice, the potentiality and the actuality, of the Enlightenment ideal of modernity. While it is true that Enlightenment has led to many problems, this has to be attributed not to the idea of modernity as such but to the path that was adopted in interpreting the idea. It is in this sense that Habermas puts forward his proposition that the Enlightenment thus has remained "an unfinished project". Identifying the project of modernity with its consequences would be tantamount to throwing the baby with the bathwater. (c) An unqualified rejection of the Enlightenment would lead to the espousal of a philosophy of despair, disillusionment, nihilism and also political conservatism, since this would indirectly strengthen those forces which are opposed to the idea of science and progress.

1.5 Debate between Postmodernism and Marxism

Postmodernism is also engaged in a debate with Marxism. Postmodernism's main objection against Marxism is that Marxism is also a component of modernity,

since it believes in a grand narrative of history, illustrated in the theory of Historical Materialism and in its grounding in the notions of reason, science and progress. Thus, postmodernism rejects Marxism's focus on a macro framework which is anchored in essentialist categories like class struggle, laws of historical development etc. Marxism, however, rejects the criticisms of postmodernism, the central premise of which is that, while Marxism was certainly a component of Enlightenment, it was also critical of the way it took shape in the sense that Marxism did not dismiss the notion of modernity but aimed at an alternative, revolutionary construction of it. Accordingly, Marxism's responses to the allegations of postmodernism are : (a) Ultimately class struggle is the key factor, despite micro level struggles. Marxism argues that without a global, macro perspective of class struggle between the forces of revolution and those opposed to it, micro level, localized struggles would not be able to make their impact. (b) Marxism rejects the anarchic, nihilistic stance of postmodernism, since this becomes ultimately the defence of a negative philosophy. Marxism, since it believes in a positive alternative to capitalism, that is, socialism, cannot accept the non-ideological, negative, stance of postmodernism, which rejects the claims of ideologies as essentialist or universalist. (c) Marxism argues that the scientific knowledge of society which it aims at has ultimately a moral purpose, since it wants to transform the bad society of capitalism into a good society of socialism, and hence it cannot accept the postmodern philosophy of absolute relativism.

1.6 Sample Questions

Long questions :

1. Explain the roots of Postmodernism and analyse its basic features.
2. Attempt an overview of the Lyotard-Habermas debate.

Medium questions :

1. Discuss the debate between Marxism and Postmodernism.
2. Examine the constituent elements of Postmodernism.

Short questions :

1. What were the historical roots of postmodernism ?
2. What is meant by "grand narrative" ?
3. What does Habermas mean by the "unfinished project of modernity" ?
4. Why does Postmodernism consider Marxism as a part of the "Enlightenment project"?

Select Readings :

- A. S.Hall and B. Gieben : *Formations of Modernity* (Cambridge : Polity Press, 1992).
- B. B.S. Turner (ed.) : *Theories of Modernity and Postmodernity* (London : Sage, 1990).
- C. Stuart Hall et al : *Modernity and Its Futures* (Cambridge : Polity Press, 1992)
- D. Z. Bauman : *Intimations of Postmodernity* (London : Routledge, 1990)
- E. Tim Woods : *Beginning Postmodernism* (Manchester and New York : Manchester University Press, 1999)

Unit : 2 □ Postcolonialism

Structure

- 2.1 Objectives**
- 2.2 Introduction**
- 2.3 Edward Said and Orientalism**
- 2.4 Postcolonial understanding of construction of the East**
- 2.5 Critiques of Postcolonialism**
- 2.6 Sample Questions**

2.1 Objectives

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

- (a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with an overview of postcolonialism.
- (b) Edward Said and Orientalism.
- (c) Postcolonial understanding of construction of the East.
- (d) Critiques of postcolonialism.

2.2 Introduction

Unit II examines the notion of postcolonialism, a term which has come of age since the 1980s. Basically it refers to a new strategy of understanding the meaning of colonialism. Till the advent of postcolonialism Marxism was considered to be the most powerful critique of colonialism, which explains the triumph of colonialism in history in terms of economic exploitation and political domination of the colonies by the Western powers. Deviating from this understanding postcolonialism seeks to explain the success of colonialism in cultural terms and argues that

colonialism sustained itself by culturally conditioning the mind set of the masses, thereby convincing them that the colonial powers are superior to the colonized people and that colonialism is the benefactor, while the colonized are the beneficiaries. This blunts the resistance against colonialism, making it possible for colonialism to triumph. This mind set, once created, leaves its hangover on the minds of the colonized even after they become free from colonial control and become politically independent. This understanding that the West is superior to the East gets so deep into their consciousness that they continue to remain culturally enslaved by this outlook for ages, notwithstanding the attainment of independence. A proper inquiry into the discussion of postcolonialism, therefore, demands an analysis of how the postcolonial theorists explain this phenomenon in conceptual terms. But while postcolonialism emerged as a powerful alternative to the Marxist understanding of colonialism, it has been subjected to many criticisms too. All these constitute the subject matter of discussion of the current Unit.

2.3 Edward said and Orientalism

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is considered as the foundational text of postcolonialism. Drawing on the ideas of Gramsci, the central argument of Orientalism is that the "relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony", based on the following propositions : (a) Europe's knowledge of the Orient has been political and not just pure knowledge, since the West's construction of the Orient has been a cultural and a political fact. (b) The Orientalist scholars of the West existed outside the Orient and their claim to represent the Orient is thereby false, unrelated to any real truth about the Orient. Thus, for Said, since the middle of the eighteenth century the relation between the East and the West has been governed by two factors. One : "a growing and systematic knowledge in Europe about the Orient, knowledge reinforced by the colonial encounter as well as by the widespread interest in the alien and unusual, exploited by the developing sciences of ethnology, comparative anatomy, philology, and history; furthermore,

to this systematic knowledge was added a sizable body of literature produced by novelists, poets, translators, and gifted travelers." Two : it was a relationship between a strong and a weak partner, since Europe looked at the East from the position of power, the East thus being viewed as the "other" of the West. The East, for the West did not exist on its own but only with reference to how the West constructed it. This contributed to the portrayal of Europe as the repository of science, reason, knowledge and progress and the consequent demeaning of the East as the symbol of backwardness and decadence. This is how the moral claim of colonization, the "civilizing mission" of Europe vis vis the peoples of the East, has been legitimated and Orientalism, for Said, thus becomes a powerful intellectual defence of colonialism.

2.4 Postcolonial understanding of Construction of the East

The postcolonial theorists have explained how the Orientalists conceptualised the East as the "other" of the West. First, in order to contrapose the East and the West, they were guided by the understanding that the East was something idyllic, a kind of golden world. Second, life in the East was marked by simplicity and innocence. Third, the East was marked by absence of developed social organization and civil society. Fourth, people in the East lived in the state of nature. Fifth, life in the East was marked by frank and open sexuality. This romanticized portrayal of the East enabled the Orientalists to anchor their understanding in a kind of idealization of the Orient by creating fantasies of degradation. Its effect was denial of the identity of the East and derecognition of the fact that the East has its own identity which is different from that of the West and that the East exists on its own terms. For the Orientalists this construction was possible, because their conceptualization of the East was explained with reference to European categories and norms whereby it was easy to declare that the West was the repository of science, reason and progress, while the East was marked by its focus on religion, superstition, backwardness and disorder. This understanding of the Orientalists, it goes without saying, was deeply rooted in their Enlightenment understanding of European modernity, which essentialized and universalized the West vis a vis the non-European world.

2.5 Critiques of Postcolonialism

Notwithstanding these powerful claims of postcolonialism, a number of criticisms have been advanced against the postcolonial understanding. First, while acknowledging the importance of Said's contribution, J.J. Clarke has pointed out that any unqualified acceptance of Said's thesis that all Oriental scholars were virtually unconscious agents of Western imperialism would be tantamount to a denial of the positive side of Orientalism. His underlying presumption is that the European Enlightenment highlighted, along with the idea of reason, also the notion of doubt and anxiety and this led a number of Orientalists to question the West's own indigenous tradition and its own so-called uniqueness. Thus, the Orient in many respects emerged as a critical reference point vis a vis the West and a number of Oriental scholars thus became genuinely interested in the studies of Taoism and Buddhism to understand the West's own predicament. This position is largely reflected also in the argument of David Ludden when he points out that the problem with Said is that he takes a highly undifferentiated view of Orientalism which is hardly plausible. Orientalism, Ludden explains, should be viewed on three levels. On one level, its scope is rather narrow, if it is understood as a distinct field of study with a specific scholarly orientation. On another level Orientalism may be viewed very broadly, which constitutes the study of a vast array of images of everything related to the Orient, namely, painting, literature, scholarly discourses etc. On a third level Ludden locates between these two extremes another type of Orientalism which he views as a distinct set of fact-finding statements concerning the study of the Orient, based on concrete data and empirical findings, which has emerged as a body of knowledge about the Orient. Said's understanding, he observes, actually refers to the second category of Orientalism.

The sharpest criticism against Said's use of the concept of Orientalism, however, has been voiced by Aijaz Ahmad, well known for his sceptic views.

Ahmad accuses Said of what he describes as "Orientalism in reverse", that is, a counter essentialism in the name of negation of the entire corpus of knowledge that has been generated in the West and which, allegedly, constitutes the foundation of Orientalism. This, he argues, stems from Said's confusion of anti-imperialism with anti-Westernism, with the consequence that the entire domain of Western knowledge is viewed pejoratively through the lens of Orientalism. Thus, Ahmad finds it impossible to accept the position of Said that the entire tradition of the West needs to be written off, since it has also produced traditions highly critical of power and domination (i.e., Marxism); furthermore, Said's position on the equivalence between Western imperialism and Orientalism and his call for cultivation of the Eastern identity to the exclusion of the West would promote conservatism and fundamentalism on the reverse gear in the third world countries, where the West has, historically speaking, been always a suspect. Finally, Ahmad finds Said unacceptable for the kind of passivity that is inherent in the notion of Orientalism, since its power is considered so sweeping that it crushes everything, and denies any recognition of the idea of resistance. In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) Said, however, recognized the place of resistance against colonialism in the colonial world and in his later writings he explained that he had no intention of promoting conservatism and fundamentalism, while critiquing Orientalism.

2.6 Sample Questions

Long questions :

1. Explain the grounds of Said's critique of Orientalism.
2. Attempt an overview of some of the criticisms of postcolonialism.

Middle questions :

1. Examine how Orientalism constructed the East as the "other" of the West.
2. Analyse in what sense the relation between the East and the West can be viewed as one of power and domination.

Short Questions :

1. How is postcolonialism different from the Marxian understanding of colonialism ?
2. How does Orientalism justify the "civilizing mission" of the West ?
3. What does Aijaz Ahmad mean by "Orientalism in reverse" ?
4. What is J.J. Clarke's critique of Said's understanding of Orientalism ?

Select Readings :

- A. Bart Moore-Gilbert : *Postcolonial Theory. Contexts, Practices, Politics* (London and New York : Verso, 1997).
- B. Peter Childs and R. J. Patrick Williams (eds) : *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory* (Essex, Harlow : Prentice Hall, Pearson Education, 1997).
- C. Bart Moore-Gilbert et al (eds) : *Postcolonial Criticism* (London and New York : Longman, 1997)
- D. Leela Gandhi : *Postcolonial Theory : A Critical Introduction* (Columbia : Columbia University Press, 1998).
- E. S. Hall and B. Gieben : *Formations of Modernity* (Cambridge : Polity Press, 1992).

Unit : 3 □ Feminism

Structure

- 3.1 Objectives**
- 3.2 Introduction**
- 3.3 Central themes of Feminism**
- 3.4 Feminist approach to Politics**
- 3.5 Schools of Feminism**
- 3.6 Feminism in the age of Globalization**
- 3.7 Sample Questions**

3.1 Objectives

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

- (a) The students will be made familiar with an overview of feminism.
- (b) Central themes of feminism.
- (c) Feminist approach to politics.
- (d) Schools of feminism.
- (e) Feminism in the age of globalization.

3.2 Introduction

Unit III, which discusses Feminism, commences with analysis of difference between sex and gender, the former being a biological and the latter being a social and cultural construct. Then, after a brief analysis of how gender became an issue in political theory, some of the central themes of Feminism are discussed, namely, the (a) public-private divide, (b) patriarchy, (c) equality and difference. Consequently, an outline of what may generally be described as a feminist

approach to politics notwithstanding certain elements of ambiguity therein is provided. This involves (a) inclusion/addition of women as active subjects, (b) rejection of the very foundations of mainstream (= malestream) political theory, (c) deconstruction and transformation of the established version of political theory. Finally, a brief discussion is made of the different versions of Feminism, namely, Liberal Feminism, Socialist Feminism and Radical Feminism.

With the growing impact of womens' movement all over the world and the emergence of woman as an autonomous subject of attention in politics, gender has come to occupy a crucial role in contemporary political theory. The basic presumption underlying the entry of womens' question as a field of inquiry is the distinction made between sex and gender, which now constitutes the foundation of what has come to be known as Feminism. Traditionally it is the biological factor, that is, sex, which constitutes the explanation underlying the discrimination that is made between man and woman and the way the superiority of the 'stronger sex' over the 'weaker sex' is justified. Feminism, however, argues that while biological inequality of sex is a natural phenomenon, when this is extended to legitimize permanently the superiority of man over woman in social life, this becomes a cultural and political construction of the male sex to perpetuate its control and domination over the opposite sex. Thus the biological distinction of sex which is natural is extended to justify what has come to be known as gender distinction between man and woman. This is what the Feminists oppose, their central argument being that, while sex inequality is a natural phenomenon, gender discrimination is not natural but a social and cultural construct. Thus, the inquiry into the question concerning how gender discrimination in society can be explained, how it is related to the issue of power, domination and control, and how the woman can emerge as an autonomous subject with her very own identity, independent of the male's construction of the woman, explains the correlation of gender and politics. Moreover, it is this perspective which provides the key to the understanding of how Feminism is now emerging as an integral component of political theory. This also provides the explanation of how the growth of Feminism has witnessed the evolution of contending perspectives.

3.3 Central Themes of Feminism

While it is difficult to provide a complete catalogue of all the components of Feminism, one major reason being that among the Feminists there are many variations, it is possible, however, to identify some of its central or representative themes. These are : (a) public-private divide; (b) patriarchy; (c) equality and difference.

(a) Public-Private divide : Traditionally it has been a standard practice to argue that men operate in the public sphere, while the women's domain is the private sphere; the two areas being almost mutually exclusive. Thus, it is contended that the sphere of politics and administration is necessarily a male bastion, while the woman's central concern is her home, her task being to act as a mother, to maintain the household and look after her husband and the family. The private sphere, according to this logic, is essentially non-political and the woman, therefore, has to be totally disengaged from politics, since she has been created by nature to remain confined to home, while nature has chosen man to operate in the public sphere, the sphere of politics.

Feminism questions this presumption and argues, on the contrary, that this discrimination is false, arbitrary and dangerous, at least on two grounds. First : this is an attempt to rationalize gender inequality on the basis of an imaginary construction of the public-private divide, the objective being to keep the public sphere, the sphere of power, exclusively reserved for men. It simply denies the fact that in matters of politics and administration, the so-called public life, the man-woman distinction is totally false and irrelevant, as there are examples galore to prove it. Second : the argument that the private sphere is non-political and the public sphere is political is a tricky explanation to justify the apparently non-political and private acts of domestic violence, oppression and discrimination perpetrated by the male members over the female members in family, in general. In other words, if politics refers to acts of power and domination, the so-called private sphere is no less political, where the woman is a silent victim in the everyday operation of the male exercise of power. This has led Feminists to

proclaim that "the personal is political" and the public-private divide thus is a social and cultural construction which has no rational basis.

(b) Patriarchy : This is a gender construct which refers to the practice of male domination in all spheres of life in society and to the kind of male dominated hierarchical social order reflective of this spirit of male supremacy. Patriarchy rules within the family as well as outside the family, even in the governance of the country. This is most strongly evident in the manning of all major political institutions by the males. While this phenomenon has been quite effectively challenged in the West, in the developing countries the experience is quite alarming. In India, for instance, this is most strongly evident in the discrimination between the boy and the girl child, the widespread practice of the premature killing of the foetus of the girl child, the male domination of our Parliament and the key administrative positions, the reluctance of the male dominated Parliament to pass the Women Reservation Bill etc.

(c) Equality and Difference : There is a trend within the feminist movement, which is somewhat traditional, and it strongly calls for achievement of gender equality. Accomplishing this goal has been the standard agenda of Feminism. There is, however, a section within Feminism, which focuses on the notion of difference rather than on equality. Broadly known as Radical Feminism this is a school which, instead of calling for equality of the gender calls for recognition of woman as fundamentally different from man. Accordingly, the representatives of this position argue that as women are endowed with certain special qualities these have got to be asserted and the notion of difference is to be highlighted so much so that women have to build up their own fraternity against the dominance of men. In this understanding the notion of difference which separates man from woman is thus made an absolute.

3.4 Feminist Approach to Politics

Within Feminism there are considerable ambiguities concerning the feminist perception of politics. For instance, there is a section which believes that the

political goal of Feminism is the accomplishment of certain rights and privileges which have been traditionally denied to women. In other words, attaining the position of equality vis a vis men is the ultimate political goal. There is, however, another opinion which is based on the premise that power and domination being the key elements of politics, which have been dominated by men, and the woman having suffered for generations because of this practice, the woman has to carve out an autonomous space, free from the sphere of male domination. The struggle for this autonomous space constitutes, therefore, the key element of feminist politics. There is, again, another viewpoint which calls for a total rejection of the mainstream understanding of political thought, which, it is alleged, is nothing but a "malestream" version, wholly constructed by men in their own interests, to the exclusion of women.

These ambiguities and differences notwithstanding, certain elements of the Feminist approach to politics can be, however, identified. These are, broadly speaking : (a) inclusion/addition of women as active subjects : this refers to the overcoming of the traditional attitude of underplaying the role of women in politics and recognition of their very distinct position. Its implication is the stipulation that the unequal position of women in society has to be changed by recognizing their rights and bringing the women at par with men. (b) Rejection of the very foundations of mainstream (= malestream) political theory : it focuses on the point that the standard, accepted version of the traditions of political theory are unilaterally biased towards men and are thus marked by their tilt against women. This leads many Feminists to argue that this male dominated tradition, which does not accord any recognition to women as autonomous subjects has no relevance for women and has to be, therefore, rejected. (c) Deconstruction and transformation of the established versions of politics : primarily writing under the impact of postmodernism, many Feminists argue that what is imperative for Feminism is to expose the male gender bias in the so-called gender-neutral versions of politics. This deconstruction of the so-called gender neutral politics aims at revealing the hidden meaning of male domination whereby the very meaning of politics is transformed.

3.5 Schools of Feminism

Feminism, however, is not one comprehensive doctrine. While it has many variations, broadly the following schools can be identified, namely, Liberal Feminism, Socialist Feminism and Radical Feminism.

(a) Liberal Feminism : Starting with Mary Wollestonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), and continued by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Liberal Feminism primarily focuses on the framing of the womens' question in the light of the philosophy of individualism. On one level it aims at endowing women with all those rights and privileges which are traditionally enjoyed by men and not necessarily granted to women and on another level Liberal Feminism fights against the standard argument that women are after security and peace in domestic life, --- a clever ploy to keep women away from politics and public life.

(b) Socialist Feminism : Initiated by Friedrich Engels and continued by such revolutionary personalities as Alexandra Kollontai in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, Socialist Feminism predominantly argues that the inequality suffered by women is the result of inequalities in class societies and, consequently, it is contended that only under socialism this inequality can be redressed. However, the crisis of socialism which was witnessed in the closing years of the 20th century has belied many of the claims of traditional Socialist Feminism. In fact, one of the objections against Socialist, especially Marxist, Feminism is that its primary focus on class actually underplays the issue of Gender as an autonomous category and does not address the issue of women in proper perspective.

(c) Radical Feminism : While Liberal and Socialist Feminism are generally regarded as belonging to First Wave Feminism, Radical Feminism, which itself has many variations, is generally associated with Second and Third Wave Feminisms that took shape in the 70s and 80s of the 20th century. Radical Feminism's central focus is on the gender identity of the woman and on how this identity, primarily expressed in her sexuality, gets distorted in the male dominated, patriarchal society. In other words, Radical Feminism argues that in the patriarchal

society the woman has no freedom over her body and as she becomes an object of sexual pleasure in the hands of men, she is transformed into a sex-object, having no control over her own body and her own sexuality. While the roots of this understanding go back to Simone de Beauvoir's celebrated book *The Second Sex* (1949), the outlook of Radical Feminism was very distinctly expressed in Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970) and Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* (1972). Particularly significant is the position of a section of Radical Feminists in recent times which espouses the cause of a kind of feminist separatism. The argument is that sex difference being a phenomenon of nature, the roots of patriarchy are deeply embedded in the male sex itself and that is why, it is contended, men are physically and psychologically oriented to dominate and oppress women. On this ground men constitute themselves as the enemy of women and the women, therefore, can survive as free and autonomous subjects only by treating men as haters and oppressors of women. This is what provides the rationale of the understanding that the woman must be free to retain her control over her own body and sexuality and there is, therefore, nothing wrong with lesbianism, for instance.

3.6 Feminism in the Age of Globalization

In the wake of globalization two rather opposed viewpoints are emerging in the realm of Feminism. These developments, however, essentially center around the two contending perspectives discussed so far, namely, the pro-state and the anti-state positions. Those who believe that the state is an institution which can be utilized for advancement of the cause of women argue that globalization has made it an imperative for the state to become increasingly pro-active in their interest. The explanation is simple. With the spread of education on the one hand and the growing uncertainty following the regime of economic reforms which globalization has unleashed on the other, more and more women are joining the work force to supplement family earnings, resulting in generation of new demands and rights claimed by them. To be more precise, the increasing entry of women as new constituents of the country's labour force sensitizes the state in regard to

the women. Consequently, the state is bound to listen to them, draw up an agenda for them and thereby recognize them as autonomous subjects demanding care and attention. In many countries, India being one of them, special Ministries with a number of development programmes catering to the welfare needs of women, have been set up. This has opened up new opportunities for women to negotiate the state in working out their own agenda. Understandably, this is a vindication of the cause the Liberal Feminists have fought for many years although it is at the same time admitted that although in many countries women are occupying high public offices, in matters of policy making, especially in the field of administration, women continue to be marginalized, as male dominance persists.

Those who are anti-statist Feminists are sharply critical and sceptical of this viewpoint in the context of globalization. Unlike the first position, the advocates of the second school, representing a variety of trends, argue that the advent of globalization has led to growing insecurity and uncertainty in the lives of women. Their explanation is that with the retreat of the state in the face of globalization the state has virtually abdicated its responsibility towards its people and the women are the worst victims of this act of the state. This is manifest on two levels. On one level in the name of furthering economic reforms and speeding up economic growth the state has allowed its economic sovereignty to be taken over by the transnational corporations. On another level the development programmes have been virtually handed over to private players and NGOs, resulting in instability and uncertainty in the lives of the common man, the main brunt of which is borne by the women. This has led to cross-border migration, trafficking in women, transnational prostitution, blatant violation of human rights, that is, severe degradation of women, all these being controlled by interest groups that are dominated by males. This also explains the growing incidents of crime against women all over the world as well as movements of protest and resistance launched by women's groups against these criminal acts. In fact, the withdrawal of state after globalization has made the interrelation of women and the state much more complex for the reason that, while earlier, it was possible to negotiate a state the centrality of which was quite visible, in the post-globalization scenario

womens' movements have to be conducted in a highly diffused environment which looks quite blurred.

Feminism, then, despite its many variations and the debates that surround its understanding, is a very important contribution to the understanding of the modern state. It enriches our knowledge of the state and sensitizes us to an issue the importance of which traditional political theory has neglected for thousands of years. It is undeniable that in the mainstream understanding of state, associated with the great thinkers of the past, the autonomous status of women as a subject of inquiry has remained generally ignored. The rise of Feminism in Political Science has rectified this faulty understanding of the past.

3.7 Sample Questions :

Long questions :

1. Explain the central themes of feminism.
2. Attempt an overview of the liberal and radical perspectives on feminism.

Medium questions :

1. Write a note on radical feminism.
2. Explain how globalization has affected the understanding of feminism in recent times.

Short questions :

1. What is the central theme of liberal feminism ?
2. How is radical feminism different from socialist feminism ?
3. What is meant by the expression "personal is political" ?
4. What is the difference between sex and gender ?

Select Readings :

- A. Elizabeth Fraser and Nicola Lacey : "Public-private Distinctions" in Alan

Finlayson (ed) : *Contemporary Political Thought. A Reader and Guide* (New Delhi : Rawat, 2003).

- B. Colin Hay, Michael Lister, David Marsh (eds.) : *The State : Theories and Issues* (Hampshire : Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
- C. Catharine MacKinnon : *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge MA : Harvard University Press, 1989)
- D. Andrew Heywood : *Modern Political Ideologies*. Third edition (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)
- E. Chris Beasley : *What is Feminism ? An Introduction to Feminist Theory* (Sage : New Delhi , 1999)

Unit : 4 □ Ecologism

Structure

- 4.1 Objectives**
- 4.2 Introduction**
- 4.3 Central themes of Ecologism**
- 4.4 Schools of Ecologism**
- 4.5 Ecological understanding of State**
- 4.6 Sample Questions**

4.1 Objectives

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

- (a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with a broad overview of ecologism.
- (b) Central themes of ecologism.
- (c) Schools of ecologism.
- (d) Ecological understanding of state.

4.2 Introduction

In Unit IV it is the issue of ecology and politics that is discussed. First, the difference between Environmentalism and Ecology is explained and it is analyzed how Ecology has emerged as a very major issue in contemporary political theory. It is shown how Ecologism challenges the presumed anthropocentric view of the relation between man and nature, which got a booster with the advent of modernity and Enlightenment. Ecologism, therefore, stands for harmonious and creative relation between man and nature. Consequently, Ecologism represents an alternative philosophical and moral outlook, which addresses the following

themes : (a) holism, (b) sustainability, (c) environmental ethics (d) postmaterialism. Finally, it is also pointed out that Ecologism is not a homogenous doctrine and, accordingly, the following schools of Ecologism, namely, (a) Rightwing ecologism, (b) ecosocialism, (c) eco-anarchism and (d) ecofeminism are briefly discussed.

Although the Green movement, expressing concern for environmental protection, has now become a world wide phenomenon, following unprecedented industrialization and its dangerous after effects, traditional environmentalism has been somewhat narrow and managerial in its outlook. It has been primarily a response, in the form of concern for adoption of appropriate measures, to crisis situations related to environment. It is in this context that a distinction is made between Environmentalism and Ecologism, the latter representing a radical moral, political and philosophical outlook, focusing on a new understanding of relationship between man and nature. The politics of the Greens that we are now familiar with, most notably in Germany, is actually a manifestation of Ecologism, which attempts to provide an alternative understanding of the relation between man and nature. To understand how Ecology has become a major issue in contemporary political theory, one has to view the issue of man-nature relation in the context of European modernity and Enlightenment. Although the central idea underlying Ecologism is that the man-nature relation is necessarily harmonious, and while it is true that this idea that man should live in harmony with nature is to be found in Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism, the advent of European modernity was a challenge to this understanding. The Enlightenment, with its emphasis on science as the guiding element underlying the idea of progress, reversed this understanding. The Enlightenment perspective taught man to view nature as an object of appropriation, control and domination. In the age of capitalism and industrialization, which became the distinguishing marks of modernity, this outlook concerning the man-nature relation accelerated environmental pollution, destruction of nature, deforestation and dangerous manipulation of the global ecosystem. While all these have been justified in the name of development and progress, these have been alleged to have been actually prompted by the considerations of business and profit in the industrial society. This is where Ecology becomes significant and

Ecologism emerges as a critique of this order as well as an alternative. It is in this perspective that Ecologism and politics have got linked up, and the phenomenon of Green politics has taken shape as a distinct field of study.

4.3 Central Themes of Ecologism

Ecologism as an alternative perspective or an alternative vision addresses the following themes : (a) Holism. (b) Sustainability. (c) Environmental Ethics. (d) Postmaterialism.

(a) Holism : Ecologism challenges the Newtonian, the Enlightenment understanding of the world which took shape in the 17th - 18th century whereby the world was viewed as a machine and knowledge was reduced to a knowledge of the parts of the machine in terms of certain definite rules or principles. This led to a loss of the sense of totality, the whole, the idea of an organic integration of man and nature. It is now contended that when Ecologism focuses on this idea of organic integration and wholeness, it draws its clues from modern science as well as ancient religions. The advent of Einsteinian physics and the rise of Quantum mechanics disproved the infallibility of the Newtonian understanding that everything can be subjected to certain universal laws. It proclaimed the idea of indeterminism, which was a blow to Newtonian reductionism. Again, the idea of the whole, one God or one Nature has been the characteristic of many religions. All these went into the making of the idea of Holism in Ecology.

(b) Sustainability : This is based on the presumption that it is imperative to protect the earth from extinction through a balanced use of energy and resources. The way pollution, overconsumption and reckless destruction of nature are increasingly telling upon the earth, Ecologism stands for the sustainability of the world. In other words, Ecologism warns us about the limits of the strain that the world's fragile ecosystem is capable of bearing. This implies on the one hand a strategic shift away from the present state of consumerism, exclusive focus on heavy industry without caring for its toxic effects, and reckless destruction of nature in the name of development and, on the other hand, an alternative strategy

of sustainable development which calls for giving priority to the survival of the planet earth.

(c) Environmental ethics : Sometimes known as Green ethics, Ecologism highlights the point that nature is like a community in which all its animate products, namely, man and animal, have equal rights as well as responsibilities. Thus it is a moral code of conduct that nature has to be respected and honoured and like men animal rights also have to be protected. In other words, environmental ethics demands that the values of tolerance, moderation and non-violence have to be espoused.

(d) Postmaterialism : This refers to that element in Ecologism which has been associated primarily with what has come to be known as deep Ecology. Modernity with its exclusive concern for science and development, it is argued, has generated the birth of a crude, materialist and consumerist individual who is obsessed with satisfaction of self-interest, without caring for its impact on his environment. Ecological concern thus explains the justification for the world-wide environmental movements and, on this score, environmental movement has come to be considered as part of new social movements like womens' movement, human rights movement etc. So it is contended that the egoistic, materialist view of life has to be replaced by an alternative, postmaterialist view of human life, where the focus will be not on narrow self-interest but on an integrated, holistic, moral understanding which upholds the view that the individual is a part of the whole, i.e., nature.

4.4 Schools of Ecologism

Ecologism, however, is not a homogenous doctrine. It is broadly divided into the following schools : (a) Right-wing Ecologism; (b) Socialist Ecologism; (c) Eco-anarchism; (d) Ecofeminism.

(a) Right-wing Ecologism : Although Ecologism has generally been considered as a variant of radicalism, the premise being that it aims at providing an alternative perspective vis a vis modernity, it is an irony that the philosophy

underlying Ecologism has also been quite effectively utilized by representatives of the Right in contemporary history. Thus, in Hitler's Germany Walter Darre came out quite forcefully with the argument that the concern for environmental protection and ecological balance called for a return to nature, a negotiation with Romanticism and glorification of the past in the name of exploring and unleashing man's vital energy. This is what fitted in quite nicely with the fascist ideology of Nazi Germany. Similarly, in the 1980s Margaret Thatcher espoused the cause of this romantic nostalgia and claimed Conservatism to be the natural defendant of Ecologism. Ecologism thus, in this perspective, has come to be associated with Conservatism's call for going back to tradition, a romantic and pre-modern, rural order, based on small communities.

(b) Ecosocialism : Ecosocialism has been primarily associated with the Left, socialist and Marxist understanding that it is capitalism which is the mother of all environmental problems. Capitalism with its drive for profit and money-spinning has destroyed ruthlessly the ecological balance and generated the birth of a society which promotes consumerism and crude materialism, without caring for human life and the global ecosystem. Consequently, the alternative that ecosocialism calls for is socialism and it is argued that socialism is the only system that takes into consideration the issue of effecting a balance between man and nature. But after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Ukraine in 1986 and the fall of Soviet socialism in 1991, followed by many startling revelations regarding lack of concern for the ecological factor under socialism, the claims of Ecosocialism are being questioned.

(c) Eco-anarchism : Influenced by the ideas of William Morris and Prince Kropotkin, Eco-anarchism parallels the classical anarchist viewpoint that governmental restrictions are unnecessary, that small communities constitute the ideal and that spontaneity and not organization is what matters. Eco-anarchism thus argues that nature itself releases the forces of spontaneity and balance and these should be left undisturbed. Any attempt to control and manipulate the forces of nature might prove dangerous and disastrous.

(d) Ecofeminism : This is a school which combines Feminism with Ecology.

The central argument underlying the Ecofeminist understanding is that women and nature are virtually synonymous, while men, guided by the notion of patriarchy, are insensitive to nature as well as women. While it is patriarchy which drives men to dominate women, it is the same patriarchic instinct which explains man's attitude of domination, control and manipulation vis vis nature. Thus, in the male dominated world of patriarchy both nature and the woman are victims of subordination and control. The argument is grounded in the logic that women by nature represent the elements of harmony, peace and spontaneity, the essential elements attributed to nature. Consequently, patriarchy becomes a threat to women as well as nature and the only alternative whereby nature and the woman can survive is through destruction of patriarchy.

4.5 Ecological Understanding of State

The ecological perspective on state presents four distinct variations : (a) Disjuncture between the centrality of the state and the localism of ecological issues. (b) Critique of statist bureaucratism. (c) State as an organization of violence makes instrumentalist use of resources.(d) Ecologism is a pointer to how the liberal democratic state disempowers the individual.

(a) Disjuncture between the centrality of the state and the localism of ecological issues : This refers to the theme "small is beautiful", popularized by Fritz Schumacher in 1976, and developed further by scholars like Zygmunt Bauman. The central argument underlying this idea is that the modern state centres around centralized structures of decision-making, as it is an expression of power which brings within its fold people as well as institutions. Ecology, on the contrary, focuses on the conservation and cultivation of resources at the local level, the emphasis being on localism and decentralization, which comes in conflict with the centrality of the state, the agenda of the latter being centralized control of the resources.

(b) Critique of statist bureaucratism : Ecologism points to the fact that the modern state is oriented towards administrative and managerial control of the

resources provided by nature in order to serve corporate needs and this is effected by the powerful institution of bureaucracy. The ecological critique of the state amounts to critiquing this bureaucratic power of the state, the underlying premise being that this statist control leads to ecological degradation. The explanation is that as man is separated from nature and man is considered as the master of nature, it leads to reversal of the normal relationship between nature and man. This is what ecologism contests, defending thereby the idea of recovering the primacy of nature over man.

(c) State as an organization of violence makes instrumentalist use of resources : the modern state makes instrumental use of technology to retain managerial control of the resources of nature. This disciplining of the resources in the name of ecological modernization leads to systematic degradation of environment on the one hand and disruption of the balance between man and nature on the other.

(d) Ecologism is a pointer to how the liberal democratic state disempowers the individual : Green politics, it is argued, is an antidote to the kind of consumerist and individualist ethics that the modern neo-liberal state promotes. These values ultimately lead to the disempowerment of the individual, since they isolate the individual from the social collective, reduce him to an atom, making him a prey of affluence and power. The greens, by emphasizing the principle of living with nature, encourage participatory democracy, community life and thereby contribute to the process of deepening democracy.

The green critique of the modern state has, however, been subjected to criticisms by those who consider the ecological perspective as utopian and unworkable. Accordingly, at least four such criticisms are generally leveled against the advocates of ecologism. First, it is argued that the kind of small communities which is advocated by the greens would promote parochialism. Second, it is pointed out that the ecological critique of the modern state is anti-modernist and its romanticization of nature is unworkable in practice. Third, the anti-statist position of ecologism would make it impossible to negotiate environmental problems that have global dimensions, i.e., global warming. The environmental crisis that affects the world today has to be addressed only with

reference to the states and their policies towards environment. Hence anti-statism would be of no help. Fourth, like the Social Democrats and the Marxists the defenders of ecologism accept the principles of social justice and equitable distribution of resources but with a difference. For them the agenda of social justice can be worked out properly not simply by focusing on the material aspect of redistribution of wealth and resources through the state but by fostering good life and free time which would qualitatively enrich the life of the individual. For the critics of ecologism, this, however, is a utopian dream, which cannot be worked out in practice.

Scholars like R. Eckersley have suggested that the ecological critique of the modern state is flawed by the fact that its anti-statism is based on a position of static abstraction, which, however, the state is not. The state is a historical category and is, therefore, amenable to improvement and modification. It can be charged with the inputs provided by the greens and its face can be changed. Therefore, what is called for is not anti-statism or a slogan of dismantling the state. Rather the imperative is the greening of the state. This involves, according to Eckersley, two elements, namely, sovereignty and democracy. As regards sovereignty, what the green understanding entails is that the traditional notion of sovereignty, focusing on territoriality, needs to be revised. As environmental problems have assumed global dimensions in recent years, their solution calls for global negotiation across boundaries and acceptance of certain rules and norms which all states have to accept as binding on them for their own survival. This is a blow to the standard notion of territorial sovereignty, largely associated with Max Weber, which underscores the absolute nature of state sovereignty. On the question of democracy the green position argues that there has to be a shift from the formal structures of democracy to a kind of ecological democracy, the foundation of which would be ecological modernization. Ecological democracy, according to Eckersley, would be different from liberal democracy in two respects. First, it rejects the liberal-democratic notion of the pre-existing autonomous individuals, who are guided by their rights and interests. Second, by shifting away from the liberal democratic position that simply recognizes the individuals as

members of the state, the green perspective focuses on the 'democracy of the affected' instead of simply 'democracy of membership'. The implication is that the state has to take into consideration the interests of all those who are victims of or are likely to be affected by ecological risks for which it is not they but the state is responsible. This leads to the suggestion that these affected persons must have a say in the determination of policies relating to ecological risks, the implication being that these sections of society would be made party to a deliberative or participatory democracy. Such a project would contribute to the greening of the state.

Despite many variations and controversies the green perspective is fascinatingly complex and is full of new possibilities in regard to the understanding of the modern state. It is evident that among the advocates of green theory there is one section which takes a strong anti-statist position, guided as it is by a kind of romanticization and valorization of nature. There is, however, a more moderate wing which talks of "greening" of the state by subjecting the latter to modification and reform in the light of inputs from ecology. Interestingly, the way the greens are inclined towards downsizing and decentralizing the state, one may be tempted to draw parallels with the neo-liberal perspective, which too is driven by the idea of minimizing the authority of the state. But this analogy is quite superficial, since the entire neo-liberal project is grounded in the ethics of the market which green theory totally rejects. The green intervention calls for a new kind of democracy which is rooted in what one may describe as green ethics, the focus of which is on collectivity, participation, community life and deliberative democracy. In neo-liberal understanding the focus is on the individual as an autonomous subject, who is apparently guided by his rights, demands and interests, but ultimately controlled by rules of the market. Besides, neo-liberalism is driven by the idea of appropriation of resources in the interest of earning profit and the ecological defence of nature and its resources does not make any appeal to them. Neo-liberalism and green theory, therefore, stand sharply opposed to each other in a relation of conflict. Ecologism despite many of its developments like its anti-modernist stance, its attitude towards nature, has set certain new standards and

new norms, making us aware of the crisis that human civilization would have to face in near future. It is also a fact that the warnings given by the exponents of green theory can be ignored in today's world only at mankind's own peril. Viewed in this light the demand made by the proponents of green theory that man-nature relationship needs a reworking, that a balance needs to be effected between nature and man demands serious attention.

4.6 Sample Questions

Long questions :

1. Examine the central themes of ecologism.
2. Attempt an overview of the representative schools of ecologism.

Medium questions :

1. In what sense can ecologism be regarded as a critique of the Enlightenment understanding of modernity ? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Summarize the arguments of the critics of ecologism.

Short questions :

1. What is meant by the ecological defence of postmaterialism ?
2. What is the essence of ecofeminism ?
3. What is meant by the ecological critique of statist bureaucratism ?
4. What is meant by the expression "democracy of the affected?"

Readings :

- A. Andrew Heywood : *Modern Political Ideologies*. Third edition (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
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- D. Vandana Shiva, "Development, Ecology and Women" in Alan Finlayson (ed) : *Contemporary Political Thought. A Reader and Guide* (New Delhi : Rawat, 2003).
- E. Roby Eckersley : *The Green State. Rethinking Democracy and Sovereignty* (Cambridge, MA : MIT Press, 2004).

NOTES

NOTES



মানুষের জ্ঞান ও ভাবকে বইয়ের মধ্যে সঞ্চিত করিবার যে একটা প্রচুর সুবিধা আছে, সে কথা কেহই অস্বীকার করিতে পারে না। কিন্তু সেই সুবিধার দ্বারা মনের স্বাভাবিক শক্তিকে একেবারে আচ্ছন্ন করিয়া ফেলিলে বুদ্ধিকে বাবু করিয়া তোলা হয়।

—রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর

ভারতের একটা mission আছে, একটা গৌরবময় ভবিষ্যৎ আছে; সেই ভবিষ্যৎ ভারতের উত্তরাধিকারী আমরাই। নতুন ভারতের মুক্তির ইতিহাস আমরাই রচনা করছি এবং করব। এই বিশ্বাস আছে বলেই আমরা সব দুঃখ কষ্ট সহ্য করতে পারি, অশ্রুকারময় বর্তমানকে অগ্রাহ্য করতে পারি, বাস্তবের নিষ্ঠুর সত্যগুলি আদর্শের কঠিন আঘাতে ধূলিসাৎ করতে পারি।

—সুভাষচন্দ্র বসু

Any system of education which ignores Indian conditions, requirements, history and sociology is too unscientific to commend itself to any rational support.

—Subhas Chandra Bose

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