

## PREFACE

With its grounding in the "guiding pillars of Access, Equity, Equality, Affordability and Accountability," the New Education Policy (NEP 2020) envisions flexible curricular structures and creative combinations for studies across disciplines. Accordingly, the UGC has revised the CBCS with a new Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes (CCFUP) to further empower the flexible choice based credit system with a multidisciplinary approach and multiple/ lateral entry-exit options. It is held that this entire exercise shall leverage the potential of higher education in three-fold ways - learner's personal enlightenment; her/his constructive public engagement; productive social contribution. Cumulatively therefore, all academic endeavours taken up under the NEP 2020 framework are aimed at synergising individual attainments towards the enhancement of our national goals.

In this epochal moment of a paradigmatic transformation in the higher education scenario, the role of an Open University is crucial, not just in terms of improving the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) but also in upholding the qualitative parameters. It is time to acknowledge that the implementation of the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) and its syncing with the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) are best optimised in the arena of Open and Distance Learning that is truly seamless in its horizons. As one of the largest Open Universities in Eastern India that has been accredited with 'A' grade by NAAC in 2021, has ranked second among Open Universities in the NIRF in 2024, and attained the much required UGC 12B status, Netaji Subhas Open University is committed to both quantity and quality in its mission to spread higher education. It was therefore imperative upon us to embrace NEP 2020, bring in dynamic revisions to our Undergraduate syllabi, and formulate these Self Learning Materials anew. Our new offering is synchronised with the CCFUP in integrating domain specific knowledge with multidisciplinary fields, honing of skills that are relevant to each domain, enhancement of abilities, and of course deep-diving into Indian Knowledge Systems.

Self Learning Materials (SLM's) are the mainstay of Student Support Services (SSS) of an Open University. It is with a futuristic thought that we now offer our learners the choice of print or e-slm's. From our mandate of offering quality higher education in the mother tongue, and from the logistic viewpoint of balancing scholastic needs, we strive to bring out learning materials in Bengali and English. All our faculty members are constantly engaged in this academic exercise that combines subject specific academic research with educational pedagogy. We are privileged in that the expertise of academics across institutions on a national level also comes together to augment our own faculty strength in developing these learning materials. We look forward to proactive feedback from all stakeholders whose participatory zeal in the teaching-learning process based on these study materials will enable us to only get better. On the whole it has been a very challenging task, and I congratulate everyone in the preparation of these SLM's.

I wish the venture all success.

**Professor Indrajit Lahiri**  
Authorised Vice-Chancellor  
Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU)

**NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY**  
**Four Year Undergraduate Degree Programme**  
**Under National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) &**  
**Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes**  
Course Type: Discipline Specific Elective (DSE)  
**Course Title : Introducing Political Theory**  
**Course Code: NEC-PS-01**

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**Netaji Subhas  
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**Introducing Political Theory  
NEC-PS-01**

**Course : Introducing Political Theory  
Course Code : NEC-PS-01**

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

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### **Structure**

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

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### **1.0 Objective**

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

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

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### **1.1 Introduction**

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

Politics in the Greek world enveloped the whole life of the individual. Politics

is a social activity through which human beings attempt to create a well organised and peaceful society. It exists due to the broad spectrum of ideas, and opinions within any society. It is always a dialogue. Theory is a tool for analysing politics. It is an analytical device that helps to advance our understanding of the political world. It simultaneously performs both explanatory and normative functions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The fourth view relates politics to power structured relationships which operate at every level of human existence. From this perspective politics is universal, occurring in every social groups, institutions and societies, large or small. It is argued that politics is at the heart of all collective social activity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

David Held defines political theory as a network of concepts and generalizations about political life involving ideas, assumptions and statements about the nature, purpose and key features of government, state and society and about political

capabilities of human beings. Political theory is not only concerned with the empirical study of the political phenomena but also prescribing the goals which states, governments, societies and citizens ought to pursue. Thus, political theory is neither pure thought nor philosophy, nor science. While it draws heavily from all of them, yet it is distinct from them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## **1.4 Decline of Political Theory**

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

Echoing Easton's view Alfred Cobban observed that there was something definitely wrong with present day thinking about politics. Contemporary political writings are characterised by lack of purpose. He attributed this to the influence of historical approach and scientific attitude of the modern political scientists.

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

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

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## 1.5 Need for Political Theory

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

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

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

Third is the evaluative role. All human actions are subject to evaluation in the

light of ethical considerations. Political theory brings out normative import of concepts embedded in political practices and subject them to critical reasoning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## 1.6 Conclusion

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Politics, despite its negative connotations in everyday discourse, is an essential and valuable human activity. While public perception often associates politics with corruption, deceit, and manipulation, a broader understanding reveals its significance in governance, conflict resolution, and power dynamics. The academic study of politics presents multiple perspectives, ranging from the art of government to the resolution of conflicts and the exercise of power in all spheres of life.

Far from being merely a struggle for power, politics is a civilizing force that enables societies to function through negotiation, compromise, and consensus-building. It is inherently linked to conflict, as differing interests, ideologies, and resource scarcity make disagreement inevitable. However, politics provides a structured means to manage and mediate these conflicts, ensuring stability and order.

Ultimately, politics is an indispensable process that shapes human societies, governing institutions, and relationships at every level. By moving beyond the narrow view of politics as mere power struggles among politicians, we can appreciate its broader role in fostering cooperation, advancing societal goals, and maintaining democratic governance.

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## 1.7 Summing Up

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

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## 1.8 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

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

### Short Questions :

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

4. Define political theory.
5. Examine the need and importance of political theory.

**Objective Questions :**

1. What is meant by anti-politics?
2. From which language is the term 'Politics' derived?
3. What does the Greek Word 'Polis' mean?

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## **1.9 Further Reading**

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

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### **Structure**

- 2.0 Objective**
- 2.1 Introduction**
- 2.2 Origin**
- 2.3 Definition**
- 2.4 Different strands of Liberalism : Classical**
- 2.5 Modern Liberalism**
- 2.6 Neo Liberalism**
- 2.7 Egalitarian Liberalism**
- 2.8 critique of Liberalism**
- 2.9 Conclusion**
- 2.10 Summing Up**
- 2.11 Probable Questions**
- 2.12 Further Reading**

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### **2.0 Objective**

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

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

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### **2.1 Introduction**

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All theories contain implicit assumptions. They bear the imprint of values and

normative beliefs. The major theories of politics address the issues of power and the role of the state. At a deeper level they reflect the assumptions and beliefs of one or other major ideological traditions. Political and social enquiry is a battleground of competing traditions: Liberalism, Marxism, Conservatism, Anarchism and so on. Each presents its own account of social existence and a particular view of the world.

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

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

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## 2.2 Origin

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

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

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## 2.3 Definition

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

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

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

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

liberalism is a single phenomenon by virtue of the four elements that constitute the liberal conception of man and society. Despite all controversies and contrasting formations liberalism remains an integral outlook whose core elements are not hard to specify.

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

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

### **Classical Liberalism**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## 2.5 Modern Liberalism

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## 2.6 Neo Liberalism

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## **2.7 Egalitarian Liberalism**

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

compatible political values and that the demands of these two values should be taken seriously when considering what the just division of burdens and benefits are.

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

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

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

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## 2.8 Critique of Liberalism

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

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

Marxists lay emphasis on the hidden dangers of liberalism. For them, liberalism

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## 2.9 Conclusion

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Liberalism, as a political tradition, has undergone significant transformations since its emergence in the 17th century. Initially a revolutionary force against feudalism and absolute monarchy, classical liberalism championed individual liberty, limited government, and free-market economics. However, its rigid adherence to laissez-faire principles led to vast social inequalities and economic hardships, necessitating a re-evaluation of its core tenets.

The emergence of modern liberalism in the 19th and 20th centuries marked a shift from the strict individualism of classical liberalism to a more socially responsible approach. Thinkers like J.S. Mill, T.H. Green, and J.M. Keynes redefined liberalism by advocating for a balance between individual freedom and state intervention. They recognized the need for a government that not only safeguards rights but also ensures equal opportunities, protects the vulnerable, and fosters societal well-being. This transition laid the foundation for the welfare state, wherein the government plays a proactive role in addressing economic and social disparities.

Despite its dominance in contemporary political thought, liberalism continues to face new challenges, including identity politics, rising fundamentalism, and increasing cultural diversity. While its core values of liberty, equality, and democracy remain influential, the adaptability of liberalism will determine its relevance in addressing the evolving complexities of the modern world.

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## 2.10 Summing Up

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- Liberalism was the product of the breakdown of feudalism and the growth of a market society in its place. Right from its inception, it has been continuously changing, adding something and discarding others. It began as a protest movement against the hierarchical and privileged authority and absolute monarchy. The main slogan of the protest was liberty in every sphere of life.
- There are several strands of the liberal tradition: Classical, Modern, Neoliberal and Egalitarian.
- Classical liberalism believed in the autonomy of the individual will and the rationality and goodness of the individual. Classical liberals defined freedom as absence of restraints. They believed in the inalienable right of the individual. In classical liberal view, state is an artificial institution based

upon social contract. It is a necessary evil. Its role is to maintain law and order, and leave the individual free.

- The development of industrial capitalism necessitated a thorough going revision of liberal theory. The revision was carried out by J. S. Mill, T. H. Green, L. T. Hobhouse, Hobson, Harold Laski, Barker among others. Modern liberals attempted to reconcile the interest of the individual with that of society so that the essentials of the capitalist system could be preserved while removing its ill effects. For the modern liberals state is an instrument of development of human personality through social reform and welfare measures. This involved abandoning the policy of laissez-faire and adopting the principle of the welfare state.
- In the last three decades of the 20th century there has been a sustained attempt to limit the role of the state in the economy and society and glorify the role of the market. It has brought into existence a new version of liberalism, called neoliberalism. It asserts the primacy of liberty. For the neoliberals market is the embodiment of freedom. They attempt to set up an unbreakable bond between freedom, the market and efficient pursuit of policies and programmes.
- Egalitarian liberalism associated with John Rawls is based on the belief that social inequality can be justified only if it is of benefit to the least advantaged. It is primarily concerned with the issue of distributive justice.

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## 2.11 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

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

### Short Questions :

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

4. Write a short note on egalitarian liberalism.
5. How would you define liberalism?
6. How is liberalism linked to capitalism?

**Objective Questions :**

1. What is the most important value for neoliberals?
2. What according to John Gray, is the core concept of liberalism?
3. What is meant by Laissez-Faire Capitalism?

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## **2.12 Further Reading**

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

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## **Unit 3 □ Marxist Theory**

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### **Structure**

#### **3.0 Objective**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

##### **3.4.5 Revolution**

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

##### **3.4.7 Communism**

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

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

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

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

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

#### **3.7 Conclusion**

#### **3.8 Summing Up**

#### **3.9 Probable Questions**

#### **3.10 Further Reading**

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### **3.0 Objective**

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

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

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### 3.1 Introduction

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

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### 3.2 What is Marxism?

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

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

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

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

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### 3.3 Sources of Marxism

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

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

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

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

English political economy constitutes the second intellectual source of Marxism. Labour theory of value has been derived from the British Political conomists of the 18th and 19th centuries. According to this theory the value of every commodity is determind by the quantity of socially necessary labour spent in its production.

According to Marx, British political economists had analysed relations between different commodities and for them value of a commodity simply expresses this relation. But in reality value of a commodity expresses relations between different men. Exchange means exchange of labour and labour, under capitalist system is a commodity. Marx made a threadbare analysis of economic ideas of British Political economists and constructed his theory of surplus value on that basis.

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

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

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

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

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

#### **3.4.1 Dialectical Materialism**

Dialectical materialism is the scientific methodology developed by Marx and Engels for the interpretation of human history. The word dialectic was used by the Greek philosophers to denote a method of discovering truth. German philosopher Hegel made scientific use of the term dialectic. For him, dialectic is the method by which human history is unfolded. Historical changes take place in a dialectical process. He developed the trilogy of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. Every stage of growth is characterized by contradictions. These contradictions induce further change,

progress and development. Thesis is challenged by its anti-thesis. Both contain elements of truth and falsehood. The false elements constitute contradictions. The true elements of both the thesis and anti-thesis are fused together in a synthesis. The evolved synthesis in course of time becomes a thesis and it is again challenged by its opposite, antithesis, which again results in a new synthesis. This process continues until the stage of perfection is reached.

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

### **3.4.2 Historical Materialism**

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

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

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

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

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

### **3.4.3 Class Struggle**

The theory of class struggle is a corollary of historical materialism. While historical materialism contains the theory of social change, theory of class struggle describes its mechanism. According to Marx, the history of all hitherto existing society has been history of class struggle. He wanted to prove that class struggle has been the permanent feature of human history. Except the primitive communist stage, all historical ages have been characterized by the antagonism between the

dominant and dependent classes. It is the result of exploitation by the property owning class of the property-less class. The interests of the contending classes are irreconcilable. It is resolved through a social revolution. The inherent contradictions of contending classes of every epoch can be resolved only through the abolition of the exploiting classes.

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

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

#### **3.4.5 Revolution**

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

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

The proletarian revolution will lead to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is a necessary prelude to communism. The transient dictatorship is necessary for finishing the tasks of revolution. It is a quasi-state which will function as the representative of the revolutionary working class. It will expropriate the bourgeoisie, centralize all means of production and increase total production as rapidly as possible. In short, the proletarian state will follow revolutionary measures

leading to the complete destruction of capitalism. The bourgeoisie will try to stage a counter revolution to restore the old system and so the coercive institutions of the state are needed to restrain the bourgeoisie.

### **3.4.7 Communism**

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

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

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## **3.5 Different strands of Marxism**

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

### **3.5.1 Orthodox Marxism**

Orthodox Marxism is closely linked to the experience of soviet communism and to the contribution of V. I. Lenin and Joseph Stalin. It was concerned with the issues of leadership, political organization and economic management. In fact 20th century is best understood as orthodox Marxism modified by a set of Leninist theories and doctrines. Lenin's central contribution to Marxism was his theory of the Vanguard Party. He argued that the workers under the influence of bourgeois ideas and values

would not realize its revolutionary potential. By itself the proletariat could not go beyond trade union consciousness. Hence, a revolutionary party duly armed with a revolutionary theory was needed to serve as a vanguard of the working class. This would be tightly knit party of professional and dedicated revolutionaries capable of exercising ideological leadership. The party was to be based on the principle of democratic centralism, a belief in freedom of debate coupled with unity of action.

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

### **Stalinism**

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

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

### **Maoism**

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

His ideas regarding the participation of the bourgeoisie in the revolution before and after 1949 integrated non-proletarian elements into the revolutionary process in China to a degree which was carried a step further by synthesis between national and

social revolution in Asia. He launched a great war on bureaucracy and thus, placed the agenda for the future. He tried to combine the principle of working class leadership over the peasants with the conviction that the centre of gravity of Chinese society was to be found in the country side and the peasantry must play an active part in building a new socialist China.

### **3.5.2 Western Marxism**

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

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

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

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

in the sphere of civil society, ideology and popular cultures much more differently than earlier versions of Marxism suggested.

Frankfurt school, whose leading members Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Habermas, attempted to recast the classical ideas of Marx while remaining faithful to certain Marxist principles. The ideas of the Frankfurt school are generally referred to as critical theory, a blend of Marxist political economy, Hegelian philosophy and Freudian psychology. They sought to reinvigorate and develop Marxism by highlighting the expansion of the state into more and more areas, growing interlocking of base and superstructure, the spread of “culture industry” and the development of authoritarianism. Their primary purpose was to expose the particular social basis of apparently anonymous domination and identify the forces responsible for preventing people from attaining consciousness of themselves as subjects capable of positive action.

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

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

### **3.5.3 Post-Marxism**

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

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### 3.6 Critique of Marxism

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

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

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

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

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

Some claim that Marxism is dead. The collapse of communism, the triumph of capitalism. New Right ideology and post-modernism have all been credited for the death of Marxism. There is no doubt that Marxism is in crisis. At the same time it is a living theoretical tradition. One cannot find all truth in the works of Karl Marx writing some hundred fifty years ago. It is a rich tradition and has undergone substantial change as it has struggled to reject economism, determinism and

structuralism. It focuses upon the problems of capitalism and upon structured inequality which is the key feature of modern society at both the national and international level. It has great utility as a critical analytical framework and the collapse of communism and the changes that have occurred in capitalist society have revitalized rather than diminished its role.

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### **3.7 Conclusion**

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Marxism remains one of the most influential and evolving intellectual traditions, offering a comprehensive framework for understanding society, history, and economic structures. It is not a rigid ideology but a dynamic system that has adapted to changing historical and social contexts. Rooted in German philosophy, English political economy, and French socialism, Marxism provides a scientific methodology dialectical materialism to explain historical processes and social transformation. It emphasizes the material conditions of human existence, class struggle, and the role of economic structures in shaping society.

Through historical materialism, Marxism presents a critique of capitalist exploitation and envisions a revolutionary path toward a classless society. The interplay between the economic base and the ideological superstructure underscores the continuous evolution of societies. Despite criticisms and modifications over time, Marxism continues to be a vital analytical tool for understanding social change, economic inequalities, and political struggles worldwide.

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### **3.8 Summing Up**

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- Karl Marx laid the theoretical foundations of scientific socialism. Lenin and Mao modelled their respective societies by adapting the principles of Marxist theory to the conditions prevailing in their countries. In the process of doing so, they have enriched the Marxist theory and practice by adding new dimension and by offering diverse interpretations to the original Marxian formulations.
- Western Marxist, while differing with each other in matters of detail, share some common elements in their formulations. They underplay the Marxian doctrine of historical materialism, where the economic base determines the super structure. Instead, they emphasize the role of human consciousness will and culture. For them mere existence of the proletariat is not enough for

a revolution to occur. They must develop the necessary revolutionary consciousness. They maintain that ruling classes are able to secure their hegemony by imposing cultural norms and values on the masses.

- Ultimately it is Marx's writing and the extraordinary richness of his conceptions of social and economic change which has provided inspiration for generations of Marxist intellectuals. Few would claim that Marxism has all the answers to the problems confronting contemporary societies. In many areas it has been found inadequate. But there is a legacy of critical social theory and analysis which remains a key resource for contemporary social scientists.

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### 3.9 Probable Questions

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#### Essay Type Questions :

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

#### Short Questions :

1. Explain the meaning of dialectical materialism.
2. Critically examine Marx's theory of historical materialism.
3. Discuss Mao's contribution to the development of Marxism.
4. Explain the concept of class struggle.
5. Write a short note on communism.

#### Objective Questions :

1. What are the three sources of Marxism?
2. What constitutes the Social Scientific Core of Marxist Theory?
3. What does surplus value refer to in Marxist theory?

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### 3.10 Further Reading

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

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## **Unit 4 □ Anarchist Theory**

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### **Structure**

#### **4.0 Objective**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

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

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

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

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

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

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

#### **4.6 Summing Up**

#### **4.7 Probable Questions**

#### **4.8 Further Reading**

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### **4.0 Objective**

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

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

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### **4.1 Introduction**

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It is difficult to explain anarchism precisely. Some scholars have raised doubt about the possibility of providing a satisfactory definition of anarchism. This is

because of the impossibility of identifying common features from among the different versions of anarchism. Even though some relatively stable principles may be identified from different accounts of anarchism, commentators differ in their opinion as to which are the core ones. Besides, the term anarchism has often been used in a negative sense. It was initially used to imply breakdown of civilized order. In popular preception it is equated with chaos and disorder. Sometimes its opponents deliberately associate it with any number of social ills to discredit it.

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

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## 4.2 Origin and Development

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

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

William Godwin in his *Enquiry concerning Political justice* gave classic statement of anarchist principles. He opposed both political authority and the institution of

private property. He argued that state power corrupts and misleads people. Pierre Joseph Proudhon described property as theft and maintained that state originated from the need to protect private property. According to him, political authority is an enemy of justice and reason.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Anti-Statism**

Anarchism regards the state as undesirable, unnecessary and harmful. Hostility to the state is shared by all anarchist thinkers. The state is without any natural or historical justification and it is opposed to man's natural cooperative instinct. They argue that state authority is based upon political inequality and it enslaves, oppresses and limits human life. It is based upon compulsion, fear, egoism and exclusion.

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

**Natural Order**

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

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

**Anti-Clericalism**

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

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

## **Economic Freedom**

Anarchists are united in their disapproval of the prevailing capitalist system. They are highly critical of managed capitalism of the post war era. State intervention in the name of giving capitalism a human face, actually strengthens the system of class exploitation. They vehemently oppose Soviet style state socialism and planned economy. Individualist anarchists argue that planned economy violates property rights and individual freedom. For the collectivist anarchists state socialism is self contradictory in the sense that state itself becomes the source of exploitation replacing the capitalist class. Anarchists prefer an economy in which individuals freely manage their own affairs without state regulation.

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## **4.4 Different versions of Anarchism**

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

### **4.4.1 Individualist Anarchism**

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

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

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

Benjamin Tucker believed that autonomous individuals could live and work

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

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

#### **4.4.2 Collectivist Anarchism**

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

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

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

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

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

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## 4.5 Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

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## 4.6 Summing Up

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

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## 4.7 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

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

### Short Questions :

1. Explain the anarchist attitude to the state.
2. Examine the anarchist concept of natural order.
3. Write a short note on anarchist view of individual liberty.
4. Write an short essay on collectivist anarchism.

### Objective Questions :

1. Who is the author of the book 'What is Property'?
2. Why do the individual anarchists oppose planned economy?
3. Why are the anarchists hostile to organised religion?

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## 4.8 Further Reading

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

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## **Unit 5 □ Conservative Theory**

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### **Structure**

- 5.0 Objective**
- 5.1 Introduction**
- 5.2 Meaning of Conservatism**
- 5.3 Features of Conservatism**
- 5.4 Different versions of Conservatism**
  - 5.4.1 Reactionary conservatism**
  - 5.4.2 Radical Conservatism**
  - 5.4.3 Moderate Conservatism**
  - 5.4.4 New right Conservatism**
- 5.5 Conclusion**
- 5.6 Summing Up**
- 5.7 Probable Questions**
- 5.8 Further Reading**

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### **5.0 Objective**

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After reading this unit learners will be able to understand.

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

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### **5.1 Introduction**

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

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

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

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## 5.2 Meaning of Conservatism

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

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

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

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### **5.3 Features of Conservatism**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## 5.4 Different versions of Conservatism

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

### 5.4.1. The Reactionary School

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

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

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

The condemnation of democratic modernity has led to their marginalisation in

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

#### **5.4.2 Radical Conservatism**

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

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

#### **5.4.3 Moderate Conservatism**

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

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

a prudent willingness to change in order to conserve. He opposed any attempt to recast politics in accordance with abstract principles such as liberty, equality and fraternity. According to him, wisdom resides largely in experience, tradition and history. Burkean conservatism is characterised by caution, moderation and pragmatism.

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

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

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

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

conservatism and in England these ideas provided the basis of what is called one nation conservatism.

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

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

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

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

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

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

contract between the living, the dead, and the unborn.

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

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

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## 5.5 Conclusion

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

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

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

Critics argue that theoretical foundations of conservatism is not convincing. The very concept of sacred body of customs and traditions is historically unfounded. The

use of organic metaphor for understanding society denies creative role of the individual in relation to his circumstances.

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## 5.6 Summng Up

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

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## 5.7 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. What is new right conservatism? Explain its nature and characteristics.
2. Discuss the nature and characteristics of moderate conservatism.

3. Evaluate conservatism as a distinct theoretical tradition.

**Short Questions :**

1. Discuss the characteristics of conservatism.
2. Examine the basic arguments of the reactionary conservatives.
3. Examine the core elements of conservatism.
4. Explain the meaning of conservatism.
5. What are the basic principles of conservatism?
6. Write a short note on neoconservatism.

**Objective Questions :**

1. What is the main underlying theme of conservative ideology?
2. What is the most salient feature of Burkean Conservatism?
3. What does Harold Macmillan mean by “The Middle Way”?

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**5.8 Further Reading**

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

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

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### **Structure**

#### **6.0 Objective**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

#### **6.2 Normative Approach**

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

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

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

#### **6.3 Historical Approach**

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

#### **6.5 Conclusion**

#### **6.6 Summing Up**

#### **6.7 Probable Questions**

#### **6.8. Further Reading**

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### **6.0 Objective**

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After studying this unit the learners will understand

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

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### **6.1 Introduction**

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Political Science deals with an infinite number of political phenomena. These phenomena appear to have varied meanings, dimensions and implications. Persons with different persuasions and perspectives look at them differently, think of them

differently, understand them differently and explain or analyse them differently and hardly there lies any substantial unity of outlook while taking those phenomena for understanding, explanation and analysis. What it indicates indeed is that there are several attitudes and approaches to understand and explain political phenomena and on the basis of inner trends and characteristics of each of these attitudes and approaches political narratives and counter-narratives have primarily grown. When the primary political narratives and counter-narratives get logically ordered and systematized, they give birth to political theories.

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

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

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

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## 6.2 Normative Approach

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

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

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

It is important to note that the great political philosopher and political theorists from Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Bodin, Locke, Rousseau, Machiaveli down to Green, Mill, Hobhouse, Marx and the many of the recent times such as John Rawls, Leo starauss, Hannah Arendt, Isaiah Berlin, Michael Oakeshott, Dante Germino, John Plamenatz, Robert Nozick etc. belong to this intellectual milieu, and

they all have attempted to criticize and repudiate some existing value as enshrined in some political thought or theory and favour and establish some particular value or set of values they think beneficial for the community from their own standpoint. These great thinkers and theorists raise a few general questions in the course of their political inquiry and on the basis of their personal opinion grown out of their intuition, past experience, general doubt and scepticism, and after logically describing and analysing each of the questions, they come to moral conclusion. The political philosophers and theorists emphasizing norm and values in their respective enterprise have tried to solve the big moral problems concerning the rights and freedom of the individuals, power and legitimacy of the state, consent and obligation towards the authority, relevance and usefulness of revolution and change and etc. The answers and the solutions as advanced by or derived from these philosophers and theorists have their significant cumulative impacts as they have been the sources of enormous political literatures and discourses grown in the later days.

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

So it is evident from the foregoing discussion that political inquiry and political analysis of political society, processes and institutions are not possible without their respective value relevance because politics essentially embodies an ethical and conscious purpose. Plato pleads for ideal state, Mill for individual freedom, Marx for classless communist society, Gandhi for Ram Rajya and the feminists of these days

for gender equality. Ethical considerations and higher social and philosophical ideals and values have been the motive force for these thinkers, theorists and the philosophers to dip into their respective inquiry and investigation for the discovery of truth they consider true. The men in state power cannot deny the relevance of the ideals and values pronounced and emphasized by the thinkers and theorists, and they more often than not recuperate their authority from serious crisis with recourse to alternative set of values and principles different from theirs and thus sustain their existence. So values and norms do not altogether reside in the realm of ideas or philosophizing of ideas. Values do have practical value.

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

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

as utopia. When these ideas revolutionize the world either at the macro or at the local level, utopia turns into a reality.

5. The statement established in normative political inquiry is mainly prescriptive. A normative statement is inclined to express preference for a particular type of order or a particular course of action which is considered right, moral or ethical repudiating the wrong, immoral or unethical. In the context of moral values and ideals, normative analysis sedulously searches out the best form of political institution and political system and expresses its assertion regarding how best the political life of man can be ensured.
6. Normative political analysis is very much connected with history. Historical explanation and description of past facts and past events have historically contributed to the growth and development of normative analysis of politics. Normative thoughts gathered momentum in the context of historical changes of political situations. Different and diverse contexts of history have given birth to new values, ideals and ideas which in turn again have changed the reality through ages. Construction and replacement of values, and philosophical ideas are very much inter-connected with the construction and replacement of the phases of human history. From very ancient time down to our own, political philosophers and political theorists have derived historical knowledge and experience from history and thus have enriched their respective political literatures imbued with high philosophical values and vision. Marx spent a big part of his study-life to know and understand the French revolution of the eighteenth century and it led him to theorize on the rise and fall of capitalism and building of the material preconditions for the growth of classless communist society.
7. Normative political analysis also entails an inclination to legal-institutional study. More often than not it starts with state and governmental systems that work under law and constitution. The trend and tradition of juridical and institutional study grow from the days of Pericles and Aristotle. Aristotle had experience of 168 city states, which led him to formulate the scheme of classification of governments and other ideas of high political values and significance.

It is relevant to note that the values, ideas and ideals that the normative political analysts and theoreticians have built from time to time are not fixed and static. Different political analyses and expositions have created new values or new set of

values replacing those created earlier. Values may again grow out of reform and refinement of old or prevailing values. New value may also result from value-conflict set in motion in any particular time of turmoil and turbulence. Again, within the same category of values, additional values involving new content and dimension may be incorporated. Liberal political values, for example, grown since the days of Locke, Mill, Bosanquet and Hobhouse, reflect itself as a broad spectrum of political values involving the recent contribution of liberal thinkers like Hannah Arendt, Isaiah Berlin and John Rawls. Normative political analysis that emphasizes values, precepts and principles does not either belong to so-called crass traditionalism, nor it is anachronistic.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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### 6.3 Historical Approach

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

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

History is the record of the past events. It carries various accounts of how a biological person is transformed into a socio-political being imbued with culture and

ability to distinguish between good and evil. The evolutionary roots of human socio-political identity and of human socio-political system are embedded in history. Development of ideas and change in them are also there in interpretations, comments and explanations made by the historians. The information implicit in biographies, autobiographies, travelogues, memoirs, commentaries and letters of the historians and historical figures act as the important primary source for the scholars in political science, who are working on themes even of significant present-day implications. Political thinkers and theorists like Plato, Hobbes, Hegel, Montesquieu, Seeley, Henry Maine, Freeman, Laski, MacIver heavily depended on history while propounding their ideas on various aspects of politics. Sir Ivor Jennings, Robert Mackenzi, G. B. Mackintosh, Samuel Bear and many other theorists and commentators had produced significant works in the domain of political science deriving several information from the documents of history. For this reason, W.A. Dunning rightly observes that political theory is a historical record of the conditions and effects of political ideas.

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

One of the most important characteristic features of historical approach is that it lays emphasis on inductive methodology. An inductive method establishes general truth by observation, experiment or reasoning from particular examples. History is essentially based on facts. The historical approach is regarded as a form of the experimental approach. In a systematic manner it gathers knowledge or builds historical laws on the basis of facts. Historical knowledge and historical laws are helpful for understanding the current pattern of functioning of various state and non-state institutions and organizations, their very nature, and also the future growth and development of institutions and organizations which are right now beset with burgeoning problems coming from social economic, political, cultural and

environmental fronts. R.N. Gilchrist points out that history not only explains political institutions, but it helps us to make deductions for future guidance.

So history provides a value framework also for men in political science. The study of history admonishes a ruler against committing wrong in public interest. This study again, substantially directs the scholar in political science what to select as a research topic for fulfilling the social purpose of research. We must have to admit that the historians have made history of political life of man. They have made available the valuable resources of society, polity and culture for the entire human race. We know from history about what had been our past, how we have arrived at present and what future is staying for us. It is history which brings the three together, throws light on them and speaks for and against them and whatever it speaks expands the map of human knowledge and cognition which are the key to enhance freedom and to place the human community in a higher state of development.

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## 6.4 Criticism of Historical Approach

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

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

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

Thirdly, there is no denying the fact that all historical accounts are reliable and true to facts. Many a time adequate care and caution are not consciously taken on the

part of some historians while evaluating evidence and facts. They may be influenced by fabricated data and manufactured information. Historical accounts thus grown are misleading and dangerous particularly for young scholars who are yet to gather prudence and erudition. James Bryce observes that historical parallels may sometimes be illuminating, but they are also misleading in most of the cases if historians happen to be less careful and cautious while gathering facts and presenting historical narratives based on them.

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

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

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

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## 6.6 Conclusion

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

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

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## 6.6 Summing Up

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- Normative approach to political science is concerned with the ethical and value aspect of the questions and issues under political study. It is prescriptive in nature and based on deductive reasoning. Philosophical, institutional and legal studies of political phenomena are closely associated with normative approach.
  - Political thinkers and theorists from the days of Plato and Aristotle have made a long tradition of normative political science which has faced a challenge as empirical approach to political science grew under pressure of the positivist wave in social science in the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century.
  - Despite several criticisms against normative approach to political theory and political science, the fundamental emphasis upon the fundamental objective and purpose of theorizing on the various issues of politics as stressed by this approach can not be denied. Many contemporary political theorists like Leo Struss, Isaiah Berlin, Hannah Arendt, Michael Oakeshott, John Rawls, etc., have all reestablished the importance of moral, ethical and purposive dimension of political study.
  - Historical approach belongs to the traditional approach to political theory. Historical approach is followed by a good number of political theorists who have tried to discover laws and rules of social and political development of human civilization.
  - As History is based on facts, historical approach emphasizes inductive generalization. On the basis of factual generalization of historical events, political theorists build theories for the present and make prediction for the future on the basis of experience and evidence derived from history.
- 1 Historical approach does have some serious limitations. Historical approach is descriptive and it is not analytical. Apart from it, the bias and prejudice of some historians may be fatal for those who are not sufficiently cautious while using the resource of history.

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## 6.7 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

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

### Short Questions :

1. Point out the limitations of normative approach of political science?
2. Attempt an overview of the historical approach to political science?
3. What is the difference between approach and method?
4. Do you find any relevance of normative approach in political theory? Argue your case.
5. What, according to you, are the limitations of historical approach to political science?

### Objective Questions :

1. What is the primary characteristics of the normative approach?
2. Why is history important for political theory?
3. Why does Karl Popper describe historical approach as 'historicism'?

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## 6.8 Further Reading

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

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### **Structure**

#### **7.0 Objective**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

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

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

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

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

#### **7.6 Conclusion**

#### **7.7 Summing Up**

#### **7.8 Probable Questions**

#### **7.9 Further Reading**

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### **7.0 Objective**

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After studying this unit the learners will understand

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

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### **7.1 Introduction**

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

experience and thinking of real life situations of the political role-players and of the functioning of their organizations and institutions the empiricists claim that they gather objective and reliable political science knowledge.

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

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

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## 7.2 Evolution and Development of Empiricism

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Empiricism, as such, as a stream of thinking evolved with John Locke and David Hume in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The underlying idea of empiricism is that the basis of scientific knowledge is observation through sense–experience. The empirical statement is concerned with the knowledge of a fact and a fact is concerned with 'is' and not with 'ought to be' questions. The ought-to-be-questions are concerned with values, ideals and morals which are not factual and verifiable. Empiricism lays emphasis on the value-neutral, impartial and unprejudiced description of objective reality. This description is logical, pragmatic and scientific the validity of which can be verified and reestablished whenever and whenever it is required.

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

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

In lieu of institutional, legal and moral tradition of political theory and political analysis, two books viz. *Human Nature in Politics* by Graham Wallas of England and *The Process of Government* by Arthur Bentley of the United States of America, both published in 1908, had set a new tradition in the sphere of thinking and analysing of political phenomena. Wallas laid emphasis on human nature and behaviour of

human beings while Arthur Bentley had his focus on the governmental process as influenced by inter-group-relations and activities of several groups. In their discussion the informal aspects of politics, so far neglected, took precedence over formal aspects like law, constitution, institution and organization. Wallase brought before us the inter-play in operation between human nature and shaping of politics not always concerned with formal politics as such. The chemistry between man's nature and politics and the vice versa are very important to understand and Wallase had done it and gave it to ourselves so as to consider politics no longer a dull study of state and constitution. Wallase is of opinion that politics is a rational and logical activity upon which the influence and impact of human feeling, habit, intention and orientation are as important as politics is on making the new components of and changing the content of human nature.

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

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

According to Merriam, politics is action-oriented and it reflects the behaviour of man which can be described systematically and hence scientifically with the help of the application of scientific methods. In the growth of empiricism in politics, Charles Merriam was an important personality because he felt it imperative to make a strong link between political science and empirical research and he brought into the domain of research in political science the ideas and items which were so far regarded as

unnecessary and irrelevant. Merriam strongly believed that political scientists imbued with empirical orientation must focus on the mental and the psychological trends and components that govern and are become evident in the behaviour of the political role-players. These, according to him, constitute also the political personality of the individuals who actually run the political organizations and act in those organization to serve purpose they hold.

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

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

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

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### 7.3 Basic Postulates of Empirical Approach

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

- (a) Greater emphasis on factual background of the subjects under study and research rather than on focussing only on structure, institution and ideology.
- (b) Discussion and explanation of political phenomena in the multi-disciplinary context composed of sociology, psychology, economics and other related disciplines.
- (c) Verification and validation of the basic idea and induction that guide political analysis and discussion.
- (d) Reciprocal relationship and inter-dependence between theory and research.
- (e) Value-neutral commitment to the study and discussion of political phenomena.
- (f) Reliance on scientific method in the generation of reliable, objective and scientific knowledge required as an input for governing institutions and organizing political activities.

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### 7.4 Characteristics of Empirical Approach

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

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

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

Thirdly, for systematic, objective and scientific theory building empirical political analysis stresses on inductive method. Political scientists are very much cautious conscious in the collection of relevant data and they analyse each of those minutely to find out its value and relevance in view of the basic proposition and intent of the

research project. As inductive method is opposed to deductive reasoning, there is no scope of speculation and abstraction in the sphere of empirical discussion and investigation. Reason in empirical analysis is grown out of real life situation and hence, it does not require deep imagination and abstract thinking.

Fourthly, empirical approach lays significant emphasis on building of empirical political theory on the basis of empirical research. Empirical research is carried through scientific methodology emphasizing observation and experiment. Empirical political theory that relies on observation and experiment is descriptive. It describes in clear terms the facts that are observed and give rise to theory.

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

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

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

Eightly, the objective of empirical approach is to develop scientific discussion and research on human behaviours and human activities relying on scientific methods of

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

Empirical approach to political study and research has created tremendous academic sensation among the students and scholars of political science. No doubt it has led to the proliferation of various angles for analysis of various and growing aspects of politics both domestic and international, and, as a result of it, many theories and approaches like behaviouralism, system theory, communication theory, structural-functional theory, game theory, etc. have evolved to make political science a more vibrant, dynamic and a very relevant and useful problem-solving discipline in the present time.

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

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

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

The critics are of opinion that fission and fusion lie in the content of political event which result from the will and intention and from behaviour of individual and group of individuals. So it would be an act of folly if we assume or try to discover homogeneity in the pattern of human behaviour and, for that matter, in the happening of political events or within the political issues besetting political life of individual

or of group or of nation. From this point of view, empirical approach gives indulgence to conservatism and favours status quo. It defies and denies the ever-changing nature of human nature, human behaviour and that of politics as such. The highly publicised commitment if empirical approach to hyper-science has underestimated the great contribution of the great political philosophers and political scientists who enriched this discipline so long since Plato and Aristotle.

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

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

The critics also expressed the view that persistent demand for inter-disciplinary

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

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## 7.6 Conclusion

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

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## 7.7 Summing Up

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- In this unit empirical approach to the study of political science is discussed and explained. Empirical approach is opposed to normative approach. It lays emphasis on factual knowledge based on sense-experience. Observation and experiment and application of statistical methods along positivist social science dispensation are stressed for the study of human behaviour and human activities which are considered as the central focus of attention in the place of institution and constitution. Empirical political approach is primarily oriented to build objective and scientific theory on the basis of objective and scientific research and, hence, it asks the researchers to shun values and to acquire a value-neutral attitude in the whole process of doing research and building value-free objective political theory. Empirical approach also en-

dorses inter-disciplinary perspective of political discussion and explanation.

- Empirical approach, although useful in research and study of some areas of politics, has been criticized severely by some critics for its excessive craze for scienticism and banishment of values from the field of research and study of human behaviour and human action in particular.

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## 7.8 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

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

### Short Questions :

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

### Objective Questions :

1. What according to the empiricists, constitute the core of scientific analysis?
2. Who initiated empirical analysis in Political Science?
3. Mention the basic postulates of empirical approach.
4. What constitutes the core element of the empirical approach to political theory?

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## 7.9 Further Reading

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## **Unit 8 □ Feminist Approach**

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### **Structure**

#### **8.0 Objective**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

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

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

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

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

#### **8.6 Conclusion**

#### **8.7 Summing Up**

#### **8.8 Probable Questions**

#### **8.9 Further Reading**

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### **8.0 Objective**

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After studying this unit the learners will understand

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

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### **8.1 Introduction**

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Feminism is a recent critical perspective in political theory. Feminism is, in fact a praxis combining both a theory built for the purpose of attaining equal rights for the women on the one hand and practice as exemplified in the movements of the feminists all over the world, that represent diverse experiences and peculiar context.

Feminism is intrinsically associated with feminist movements and feminist movements are the result of the growth of feminism. Right consciousness or identity consciousness of the women is apparently prior to women's movement, but this consciousness is a necessary outcome of the subjugated and suppressed socio-political condition the women were used to experience in course of their living.

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

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## 8.2 Growth of Feminism

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

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

Wollstonecraft, in her work, raised first the main concerns of feminist critique

against 'malestream' political theory. In opposition to the discriminatory projection on education advanced by Rousseau, she established the social role, rationality and claim for equal rights of the women. Wollstonecraft was the liberal feminist who stressed the right to education, right to property and the right to participate in the process of politics. Some fifty years before the emergence of the female suffrage movement in Britain and in the United States of America, Wollstonecraft strongly advocated for the right to vote without which, she asserts, democracy remain incomplete. She criticizes the confinement of the women to the 'private sphere' and thus asked them to have connection with the 'public sphere'. She is of opinion that when a woman goes beyond the private sphere and participates in the activities in the public sphere and receives education she is placed in the status due to her as a person.

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

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

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It is now important to discuss some general but significant concepts associated with all shades of feminism before we deal with other schools or forms of feminism. One such general concept is the concept of public-private divide. There is a common belief prevalent long in society is that men function in the public sphere while the general works and activities of the women happen in private sphere that is within the confine of their respective family. To go beyond the private sphere and work with

others in the public sphere on the part of the women is a social and cultural taboo upon them and even punishable in some places and within some communities. It implies that in the realm of politics and administration that lies in the public sphere, women are prohibited. They are permitted to work for her husband and offsprings and others in the family and to perform domestic duties within the private sphere. Private sphere is devoid of effective power with which the women have or should have no connection because any such connection is injurious to their being women and this particular beingness of the women is created by nature which has settled the public sphere only for the men.

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

Patriarchy is another important concept against which the feminists are very critical. Patriarchy literally means 'rule by the father'. In feminist analysis, it directly denotes the combination of power, authority and the absolute domination or hegemony of the male head of the household. Obtaining its legitimacy from the long-drawn customs and practices having its deep roots into the mind and body of man and society the husband-father subordinate his wife and children within the family. In society the male members receive and acquire the patriarchal mindset and power

operating within the families, and, on the basis of it, they assume the hegemonic authority for total oppression and exploitation to which women are subjected. In patriarchal socio-political regime, women are subordinate and subservient to the male both within and outside the family in the spheres of politics, economy and culture. Patriarchy is thus the key cause of female domination and exploitation. The female uses to experience every now and then the diverse implications of patriarchy both within family and in society. Patriarchy turns into an all-pervasive culture into which the female members of society in particular are inducted. The tentacles of patriarchy have a huge spread in educational institutions, religious organizations, sport bodies and elsewhere. They permeate bureaucracy, police, military, judiciary all belonging to state system.

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

Sex and gender distinction is again another concept associated with feminist theorization. Patriarchy views that the role of the women in society is biologically determined. Biologically male and female are different from their very birth and hence their respective social roles are not similar but different. Patriarchy considers the females not as powerful physically as males are. Since this difference is unchanging, the females are confined to the structure of family which is their personal sphere where they fulfill the goal of perfect life performing domestic duties, bearing children and rearing them. The feminists attack this biological determinism as the most important source of male domination in society. Biological determinism creates an egoistic personality and an expression of masculine tyranny for the male with which they determine the do's and don'ts for the female. Simone de Beauvoir

holds the view that one is not born but rather becomes a woman. A society ruled by patriarchy, artificially constructs the ideas, conditions, mores and customs relating to masculinity and femininity and these taken together give birth to gender ideology. This gender ideology builds the socio-political image and identity specific to men and women and decides their respective space and respective roles. At the time when one is born, one is recognised simply as a baby, but it is society and the system based on patriarchy, the notion and characteristic or attribute of masculinity or femininity is imposed upon the baby. In the course of upbringing and living in society the baby becomes male having masculine gender or female having feminine gender. So gender is a social construct. It indicates whether one will rule and suppress or will be ruled and suppressed.

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

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

But a group of a feminist in the mid seventies of the twentieth century has given stress on difference instead of equality for the women. They contend that the women possess distinctive virtue because it is they who menstruate, bear and rear children, perform domestic works and serve the elders in their respective families. This virtue

helps the women to have a distinct identity and a distinct space in society. These feminists are also of opinion that the women are not only a community distinct from the community of men, because of class and ethnic distinctiveness, all the members belonging to women community as such are not equal. The feminist movements of the seventies of the previous century have raised with greater importance the individual characteristics and the separate and distinct identity specific to the women. This assertion of self-identity of the women posed a formidable challenge against male domination and it helped form association of the women themselves for holding debate and discussion on women's issues.

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## 8.4 Waves of Feminism

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

The second phase feminism or what is called the 'second-wave feminism' is distinct from the first phase or first wave feminism and is much more powerful than it. In fact, the contemporary students' movement, civil rights movement and national liberation movement held in several parts of the world were the main inspiration of the more articulate feminist movements took place in this phase. The feminist theorists and activists held patriarchy directly responsible for discrimination against

and disregard of women. Some feminist activists point to sexual exploitation and sexual oppression as existent even in heterosexuality and, thus, they mark the men as natural enemy to women and support homosexuality as a protest against patriarchy. In this phase it gets clear that through various institutions and social practices as prevalent in society such as marriage, sexual habit, domestic mores and customs, the male establishes their dominance over the female. In this context, the feminists felt it an imperative to build organizations for themselves to challenge this dominance on the one hand, and to grow awareness among the women in particular, about emancipation and freedom of the women on the other. In this phase, a few women's organizations were grown in the United States. Betty Friedan built National Organization of Women in this phase. In 1970, Carol Hanisch wrote a book under the title "The Personal is Political" and this title became the political argument and a rallying slogan of second-wave feminism.

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

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

But the importance of post-feminist projection is not denied. Because it is widely considered as a continuation of the feminist thoughts and movements of the preceding days. Post-feminism is multi-dimensional and it addresses the feminist

issues of the Afro-Asian and Latin American women who live under much more difficult condition and suffer multiple subjugation and exploitation because of backwardness engulfing their state, society, politics and culture.

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## 8.5 Typology of Feminism

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

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

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

Socialist feminism like Marxist feminism is based on the Marxist theory. But it

throws light on the subjects Marxist feminism does not incorporate. Socialist feminism lays stress on gender discrimination while class discrimination received greater attention by the Marxist feminists. The socialist feminists opine that patriarchy is much more deep and penetrative than an exploitative social system. Patriarchy is not necessarily connected with the institution of private property and, hence, abolition of private property does not put an end to patriarchy. The Marxist feminists do not pay much attention to family, domestic labour and to matter like reproduction, which are important concepts in feminist analysis.

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

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

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

to become the 'second sex'. Boldly she asserts, 'one is not born but becomes a woman'.

According to Shulamith Firestone, another radical feminist, human reproductive biology is responsible for considering women the weaker sex. The prevailing norms and social values work behind the reproductive biology compel the lactating mother to feed the dependent babies and in turn the mother becomes dependent on her husband. So liberation of women requires a holistic effort which involves both objective and subjective dimensions.

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

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

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

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## 8.6 Conclusion

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- Feminism as an approach to the study of political science is different from other approaches. The feminists are of opinion that the domain of political theory like that of mythology, literature and culture is male-centric. Mainstream politics, they strongly observe, is but malestream politics. The women who constitute even more than the lion's share of the total resources of the world and receive less than one percent of it, are subject to domination, exploitation and violence. Both the institution of patriarchy and multi-dimensional vulnerability of the women are ubiquitous and restlessly terrifying. Feminism signifies the protest against the male-dominated theory, ideology, socio-political practices, and culture which deny freedom, equality, power and rights of the women and have suppressed and subjugated them over centuries.

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## 8.7 Conclusion

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- The critical perspective of feminism is an important key to understand politics which does have multiple meanings and diverse manifestations.
- The theme or perspective of feminism has now led to proliferation of research not only in the field of political science but in other disciplines dealing with human relationships irrespective of their focus specificity.

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## 8.8 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. What are various concepts associated with feminism. Explain those concepts.
2. What are the main propositions of liberal feminism? How the radical feminists criticise liberal feminism?
3. What are the basic contentions of Marxist and Socialist feminisms. Is there any difference of emphasis between the two?

4. Point out the main content of postmodern feminism. What are its limitations?
5. Make, a critical estimate of feminism as a necessary perspective of political theory.

**Short Questions :**

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

**Objective Questions :**

1. Define gender. How do you differentiate gender from sex?
2. What does 'personal is political' imply?
3. How do the feminists view patriarchy?
4. What is the basic argument of the radical feminists?

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**8.9 Further Reading**

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1. Gauba O.P., *Political Ideas and Ideologies*, New Delhi, Macmillan, 2010.
2. Basu, Rajeshree and Chakraborty, Basabi (ed), *Prasanga Manabividya*, Kolkata, Urbi Prakashan, 2008. (in Bangali)
3. Walby, Sylvia, *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Basil Blackwell Inc., Cambridge, Great Britain, 1990.
4. Beauvoir, Simone de, *The Second Sex*, London, Vintage Publishing, 2010.
5. Heywood, Andrew, *Politics*, New York, Palgrave, 2007.

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## **Unit 9 □ Postmodern Approach**

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### **Structure**

#### **9.0 Objective**

#### **9.1 Introduction**

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **9.7 Conclusion**

#### **9.8 Summing Up**

#### **9.9 Probable Questions**

#### **9.10 Further Readings**

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### **9.0 Objective**

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After studying this unit, the learners will understand

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

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### **9.1 Introduction**

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Postmodernism is a sharp intellectual movement against modernity. It presents a pungent criticism of painting, art, architecture, literature, movie, music, history, theory and doctrine, etc., emanated out or drawn in the spirit of modernity. Although the notion of postmodernism dates back to 1870 when John Watkins Chapman, an

English painter used the term postmodern while reviewing the impressionist art of the French, in the field of social science as such, postmodernism, as a critical perspective, is a development of the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century. Jean Francois Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard are the main exponents of postmodernism.

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## 9.2 Meaning of Postmodernism

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

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

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

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

Modern age was as an age of progress too. On the basis of unprecedented

development of science and technology, transport and communication industrial production and trade and business get a tremendous fillip which helped to boost market worldwide. This age put an end to feudalism and gave birth to a new civilization based on new mode of production. This new civilization asserted the supremacy of reason which made man his own master. In this respect, modernity is an offshot of Enlightenment which according to Kant stands for man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity which hinders man's own understanding of his immense power inherent in him.

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

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

But postmodernism has no unified, essential and foundational definition, nor it represents a so-called coherent theoretical scheme with formidable doctrinaire position usually preferred by a typical scholar in social science or by socio-political activist working on any uni-dimensional issue. The central theme of postmodernism as developed by the thinkers is oriented to criticize the notions and the social and political messages of modernity and to point out the limitations of it as a praxis. These limitations were exposed in the course of its operation both at the level of theory and practice to which all dominant social and political theories and their practical manifestations including Marxism have been subjected to. Instead of essentialism, foundationalism, totality, universalism, determinism and homogeneity inherent in modernity, postmodernism relies on relativism, pluralism, detotalization, localism, disclosure and fragmentation, deconstruction and heterogeneity.

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### **9.3 Origin of Postmodernism**

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

were raised contesting the claims of modernity to (a) emancipate man from unreasonable exploitation and oppression of myriad forms and degrees, (b) ensure progress, and (c) make new history of mankind free from unreason and untruth.

### 9.3.1 Philosophical Sources

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

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

Martin Heidegger is very much averse to positivism of modernity and to modern technology which, according to him, lead to homelessness. Modern technology, he contends, is dangerous because it is the ultimate distance from the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, existence or reality. Heidegger seeks to restore a home for man in an awareness of Being. In the *Letter of Humanism* of 1947 he says that homelessness consists in the abandonment of Being by beings and because of it the truth of being remains unthought. Heidegger is in favour of

liberation of language from grammar which asks everyone and everything to strictly conform to rules. He opines that thinking begins only when we have come to know that reason glorified for centuries, is the most stiff-naked adversary of thought. Instead of modern utilitarian, technological and, for that matter meaningless and empty world Heidegger aims at returning to a supersensuous world where Being would present itself in its plenitude. His philosophical attitude to modern technology leads him to oppose both the capitalist and socialist industrialism.

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## 9.4 Postmodernist Thinkers

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### 1. Lyotard

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

### 2. Foucault

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

languages and discourses which reflect power distributed among the members of society.

Foucault believes that knowledge is not immune from the workings of power. Power, as he says, has the character of a network which has a wide reach in society. In his opinion, schools, hospitals, workshops, barracks of modern society are all, in fact the epitome of power where men in there are to become socialized and to work under strict surveillance of the person who can use language, sign, symbol and discourse with greater dominance. Foucault opines that there are various forms of human rationality, diverse and heterogeneous traditions of reason in the histories of human societies, different modes of logical consistency and argumentations which together contradict the monist privilege of essential reason. The reason of Enlightenment is thus repressive to all other forms of reason ; it marginalizes all other reasons and excludes them as unreason, thereby builds an imperialist regime of a despotic reason which forcefully declares itself as the supreme and sovereign and trivialize others as being inadequate, fragmentary and subordinate. So according to Foucault, post-Enlightenment reason is a discourse of power which standardizes, homogenizes and determines what is rational and what is irrational.

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

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

Archaeology of Knowledge (1969), History of Sexuality (Vols I-III, 1976-1987-1990) and Discipline and Punish (1977) are the major works of Michel Foucault where he has presented his critique of modernism and his own post-structuralist and postmodernist position.

### **3. Derrida**

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

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

### **4. Baudrillard**

Jean Baudrillard is an ardent postmodernist who later views postmodernity as completely a new phenomenon totally dissociated from modernity. Baudrillard starts his postmodernist philosophical journey with his opposition to Marxism. He has introduced the idea of symbolic exchange as against economic exchange. He is of

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

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

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

It is relevant to mention here that none of the postmodernist interpretations as advanced by Lyotard, Foucault, Derrida and Baudrillard is above and beyond criticism. Charles Taylor, Noam Chomsky, Camil Paglia, Jurgen Habermas among others have raised serious allegation against postmodernism for its conceptual inconsistency as evident in understanding and presentation of the overall trends of the world we are living in. The language, the postmodernist thinkers have used is exorbitantly complex and full of jargons thereby making their statements unusually critical.

Various critics are of opinion that, postmodernism is highly diverse intellectual activity as a result of which it can not provide any distinct idea about what postmodernism does mean in particular. It lacks coherence and promotes resistance to reliable knowledge and relativism in culture and morality.

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## 9.5 Features of Postmodern Perspective

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

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

and, hence it is difficult to step outside the net of power. The concept of power, according to postmodernist perspective is multi-dimensional as it operates in much more subtle and small level of regular human activity.

5. The state in postmodern discourse does have no class character because of the fact that society and state do have multiple discourses of multiple groups and entities basing on gender, class and ethnicity. Class-centric politics, according to the postmodernist interpretation, is too limited and does not represent the diverse narratives and interactions taking place in the realm of society and state.
6. Postmodernism defies universal reason and the prospect of rational thinking as emphasized by modernism. For this matter, it goes against its project of humanism and the assurance of independence, freedom, democracy and so-called scientific advancement of human civilization as pronounced by modernity which has extolled its pure reason and science winning over spiritual forces. The postmodernists are of opinion that western ideologies based on the spirit of European Enlightenment, instead of expanding independence in thinking and belief in progress of human race, have allowed the politics of power and are used to colonize foreign cultures and subjugate the minorities and the underprivileged.
7. Postmodernists contend that politics is all-pervading and it is the fundamental basis of our life, of our thinking and activity. All aspects of our life and activity, our existence and feeling, thinking and consciousness, our realization of nature and of needs of others are derivatives of politics which again is shaped by them. Politics is thus an important component of human life and the core of politics is composed of whatever happens in the realm of thinking and activity of human being.
8. Postmodernism tends to reject broad narratives which are taken as authoritative and conceal diverse narratives in the name of absolute and essential reason and science by means of homogenization of all plural and heterogeneous forces existing in state and society. Jacques Derrida, hence, has urged the need for deconstruction of the modernist construction and the modernist text or discourse which do not represent the concrete reality or truth. The purpose of deconstruction is to discover the opposite discourse of the prevalent language and text which rationalize metaphysics as science and domination as natural rule.

9. Postmodern condition of the present world is characterized, as Baudrillard observes, by symbolic exchange simulation, hyperreality and seduction. The media and the electronic devices have changed the social, economic, political and cultural processes as introduced by modernism and have taken away distinction between signs and reality. The media today is no longer the mirror of reality, but it becomes even more real than reality. This hyperreality have created a catastrophic culture absorbing the masses who later forget everything meaningful and who lose the revolutionary hope as Marx urged or the need for reform as Durkheim hoped.
10. Postmodern perspective is appeared as distinct and exceptional. When all other theories tend to prescribe any particular state of affair as being good and ideal and guide people to follow and execute it to benefit them, postmodernism does not search for any master discourse. On the contrary, it encourages relativism and scepticism towards and also sabotage against dominant theory, dominant ideology, dominant epistemology and dominant socio-political and cultural force.

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

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

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

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

A few other Marxist ideologues have denounced postmodernism using several virulent comments like (a) it is disguised enemy of Marxism, (b) it is intellectually marked nihilism, and (c) it is a bourgeois ideology in its finest sophistication, etc.

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

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

Fredric Jameson has criticized postmodernism from a rather moderate Marxist standpoint. According to him, postmodernism is the cultural logic of late capitalism. He opines that modernity is the relevant culture of market capitalism while globalized capitalism has created postmodernism as its relevant culture. He has opposed Lyotard when he advocates incredulity to meta-narrative, and observes that the relevance of meta-narrative is still valid. He strongly holds the view that history could not be reduced to only text and narrative, and history, according to him, is the narrative of

class struggle. In the sphere of politics, he believes firmly, the notion of totality can not be avoided. Jameson is of the view that postmodernism refuses to critically engage itself with the meta-narrative of capitalization and globalization. This refusal makes it consistent with prevailing relations of domination and exploitation.

Perry Anderson has identified a new kind of capitalism which rose in the very later part of the twentieth century. It has led, as he observes, to the birth of postmodernism. Uncertain, restless and speculative stock market condition determining the worldwide flow of capital is the characteristic of this new capitalism. This time is a time of boom of information technology which transforms the real man into a digitized image altogether averse and unable to reverse the consistent trend of frustration, cynicism and negation spread in all spheres of life. Features and trends of this age are, Anderson contends, features and trends of postmodernism.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sixthly, Marxism believes in uniformity so far as the composition and development of history are concerned. It negates difference. According to the Marxists, class is the chief component of society and history and they develop according to the universal logic of class struggle. But, on the contrary, the postmodern view of history has its emphasis on difference, fragments and deconstruction.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prison Notebook by Antonio Gramsci were the exercises into understanding the particular situations of revolutionary processes against contemporary feudalism, capitalism and fascism.

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## 9.7 Conclusion

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Marxism is basically a subjective instrument to change the objective reality of class exploitation and class domination. But literatures like Bukharin's theory of Historical Materialism : a Manual of Popular Sociology, Stalin's Foundation of Leninism and A Short History of the CPSU (Bolshevik) etc., have transformed Marxism into science and into manualized doctrine. The turning of Marxism into a Bolshevik phenomenon, its growing Stalinization, the outright negation and forceful repression of the 'other' or the 'different' as represented by Trotsky or Rosa Luxemburg, growth of absolute centrality and bureaucratization in the structure and functioning of the communist party particularly in Soviet Union, etc., had reduced creative Marxism into mechanical, hyperrational and regressive Marxism which reflects essentialism, absence of difference and otherness and negation of democracy and tolerance. The Soviet communist experiment with the East European nations like Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia narrates the meta-narrative of control, surveillance and domination upon which the 'Soviet Marxism' excessively relied. This storyline of the 'Soviet Marxism' got it in permanent closure towards the close of the twentieth century.

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

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## 9.8 Summing Up

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- Postmodernism is the critique of the basic ideas and assumptions of modernism and their impacts on art, literature and theories and discourses of state, society, politics and culture.
- Modernity is a necessary product of European Enlightenment that emphasized the totalizing and essentializing notions like rationalism, scienticism, humanism, integration and general progress. But the objectives social and

political reality as grown even in enlightend Europe and America in the face of diverse socio-political chaos and contradiction has challenged the basic assumptions of modernity and bring out the hollowed content of grand theories and metanarratives built upon those ideas and assumptions modernity incorporates and espouses.

- As aganist modernist discourse, Lyotard, Foucault, Derrida and Baudrillard and many others drawing impetus from Nietzsche and Heidegger have emphasized the existence of multiple meaning of truth and they have questioned the validity of settled assumptions of knowledge relating to society, culture and civilization.

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## 9.9 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Discuss the background of the emergence of postmodernism.
2. How do the Marxists criticize postmodernism?
3. Give an account of the postmodernist critique of Marxism.
4. Attempt an overview of the viewpoints of Foucault and Derrida.
5. In what can postmodernism be considered as a critique of modernity?

### Objective Questions :

1. What do you mean by postmodernism ?
2. What does Derrida mean by 'deconstruction'?
3. Why is postmodern perspective opposed to historicism?

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## 9.10 Further Reading

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1. Ritzer, George, *Modern Sociological Theory*, New York, McGRAW Hill International Editions, 1996.
2. Datta Gupta, Sobhanlal, *Marxism in Dark Times*, London, Anthem Press, 2013.
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## **Unit 10 □ Post-Colonial Perspective in Political Theory**

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### **Structure**

#### **10.0 Objective**

#### **10.1 Introduction**

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **10.5 Conclusion**

#### **10.6 Summing up**

#### **10.7 Probable Questions**

#### **10.8 Further Reading**

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### **10.0 Objective**

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After studying this unit the learners will understand

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

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## 10.1 Introduction

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

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

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

the education and learning pattern of the native was much inferior to education and learning as rife in the lower primary schools in England.

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

Postcolonialism is indeed a study of the cultural conflicts and confrontations and their several ramifications which are very complex as they appear often mutually contending. These cultural conflicts and confrontations befall between the dominant racist colonizers of Europe and the colonized of Asia and Africa. Postcolonialism is not culturally or theoretically something that has evolved in the period when and where colonialism had ended. The mainstream theorists of postcolonialism have emphasized the notion of postcolonial condition or the condition of postcoloniality as an important theme inherent in postcolonialism and most of them, thus, justify not to append hyphen between post and colonialism. These theorists are of opinion that the

colonizers use to have intention to establish perpetual cultural hegemony upon the colonized nations. They firmly require to destroy not only their respective economy but to crush their language, education, culture and general understanding of moral principles. Desperately they use to follow very deliberate and subtle plan to implement so as to get the general desire, taste and common ideas and prejudices of the people of the colonies consistent with and suitable to the colonial interest of the West. Perpetual subservience and subordination of the colonized to the supremacy and hegemonic hold of the colonizer refers to the condition of postcoloniality or postcolonial condition. This condition exists during the course of colonization and does not cease to exist when colonization comes to an end and the colonized acquires political statehood. Because of colonial hangover widely pervading the ideas and institutions, values and cultures of the peoples once colonized the prescription of the theorists and writers for withdrawing the hyphen between post and colonialism appears justified and consistent.

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

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

Fanon is very much critical against the pervasive psychological and political

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

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

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

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

Fanon is of opinion that colonial world is bifurcated, and it is bifurcated between the ruler and the ruled, colonizer and the colonized, western and non-western, White and non-White. This bifurcation predominates the ideas and activities of the two contending groups or the parties of the colonial world. Anti-colonial national liberation struggle, as he held, posed the challenge against domination and racial supremacy of the colonial rulers and their associates on the one hand, and on the other, it grew courage in the minds of the dejected colonized to raise human demands for freedom and equality. What is worth mentioning here is that Mahatma Gandhi in India and Ngugi, Cabral and Mboya in Africa had expressed their views favouring the varying influences of anti-colonial nationalism.

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

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

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

In *Orientalism*, Said has elaborated, indeed, a unique understanding of imperialism and colonialism as the epistemological and cultural attitude which accompanies the obvious habit of dominating and ruling distant territories. In his *Culture and Imperialism*, Said, again, has elaborated this idea. Here he writes that imperialism and colonialism do not indicate a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. He opines there that both imperialism and colonialism are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations and these ideological formations are

based on the relationship between power and knowledge. This relationship is the source of hegemony that is imposed by the imperial and colonial rulers upon the people of the colonies. Power and domination backed by knowledge is turned into legitimate authority which is hegemonic in nature and which is not normally defied by the people.

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

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

Primarily Said welcomes orientalism of the western scholars. But a clear and deliberate effort to belittle and humiliate the East is definitely found implicit in the

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

In his *Orientalism*, Said holds the view that by means of constructing the above-said stereotypes the western orientalists despise and neglect everything eastern and establish their own supremacy. Along this line of activity colonies are built, the indigenous education, culture, knowledge and the free spaces of common life of the people of the colonies are occupied and exploitation and persecution are kept in motion. Orientalism of the West is thus violent in nature and it is this discourse, Said observes, that offers representational violence. As he says, orientalist stereotypes invariably presupposes and confirms a totalizing and unified imperialist discourse. The arrogant and violent knowledge implicit in western orientalism, Said argues, led the imperialist and the colonial rulers and their associates to glorify and valorize their

'self' and disdain and humiliate 'other'. The power and authority the imperialist and the colonialist rulers thus assume is not only cultural and psychological, but it is also political and economic and then it is military. Western orientalism constructs the identity of conqueror colonizer and superior for Europe and for the non-Europeans it constructs the identity of the conquered, colonized and inferior. So, as Said opines firmly, orientalism and knowledge about the orient of the occident scholars indicates a distinct scheme of relationship of power between the colonizers and the colonized, between the West and the East and between Europe and non-Europe.

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

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

wealth of the colonies. His *River Between* (1965) is an express product of this protest attitude Ngugi had long cherished before his publication of *Decolonizing Mind*.

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

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

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

What Bhaba has told in his *Location of Culture* (1994) and *Of Mimicry and Man* (1984) and elsewhere is that the imperialist powers have brought various changes in the realm of language, education, culture and life-processes of the people in the colonies. The primary objectives of this change-effort were to establish colonies and to consolidate their all-round hold upon there. Introduction of western education and

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

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

of double consciousness. This double consciousness does not exist only among the colonized in the periphery, it exists even in ideas and activities of the colonizers of the centre, and as a result of it, the colonial identity, the colonial administration and the colonial edifice have been nativized and rift and tension are produced within the structure of power. So hybridization, as Bhaba argues, can be said to be responsible for the mutual transculturation of the colonizer and the colonized. It leaves neither the colonized nor the colonizers to remain in pure, rather it forges inter-civilizational contiguity between masters and the so-called slaves in the colonial non-west.

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

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

a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect. But in Location of power, Bhaba argues that the colonial rulers intended to make the colonial subjects into reformed and recognizable mass through mimicry or mimicking the westerners and they even used to accept and regard them as 'almost the same, but not quite'. Bhaba strongly opines in this context that this attitude of the colonizers is fundamentally humiliating and this colonial attitude proves post-Enlightenment civility as being devoid of its essence, honesty, humanity and universality. But mimicry itself, as Bhaba emphasizes, is not altogether devoid of political meaning. The parts of ideas and experiences gathered in the process of mimicry promote and enrich the anti-colonial texts and it results in the expansion of the scope of or the space for anti-colonialism and decolonization.

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

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

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

resources is not homogeneous and the orientation of the attempt of discussion, analysis of and theorization on this colonial domination and exploitation can not be unilinear and totalizing but multi-dimensional and pluralistic in nature.

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

Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak has highlighted on the problems of representation by the sub-altern. She, in her essay entitled *Can the sub-altern Speak?* (1988), has raised the question about whether the sub-altern can exhibit their vocal existence or can raise their voice signifying their existence or not. Spivak observes that the postcolonial theorists undergoing schooling in and orientation to western mode and system of so-called modern education and learning have come forward to raise the narrative of grief and suffering and also displeasure and agitation of the sub-altern women and they want, thus, to represent them. But she finds no fundamental sympathy and sensitivity immanent in western knowledge, culture and epistemology by virtue of which any scholar oriented to that knowledge and culture can reach the sub-altern become one of them and understand their voice. Rather Spivak finds insurmountable and huge gap between listening to and voicing of the sub-altern, because the curious scholar wishing to understand the sub-altern and to represent them and the sub-altern

themselves are mutually 'other' to each other; and since they do not belong to the same knowing race and community, the people belonging to the sub-altern category or class are, as they appear, speechless and unrepresented. In this analysis, Spivak also expresses her strong belief and opinion that the women within this sub-altern class or social category are more sub-altern than the normal sub-altern for the reason that the place where they live or exist in sub-altern society is shadelessly dark, a place absolutely unreachable for a narrator wishing to make enlightened, rational, human, modern and universal narrative.

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

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

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

Thirdly, postcolonialism and post-colonial literatures and other socio-political writings and analyses are directly and indirectly associated with anti-colonial protest and movement for decolonization. Frantz Fanon was the first powerful thinker who

most formidably described how the western colonizers used to destroy education, knowledge, culture and civilization of the colonial subjects; and they valorized their own education and culture to legitimize and institutionalize imperial and colonial rule. *Black Skin White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, two important works of Fanon had tremendous impacts on the subsequent proliferation of postcolonial writings of the latter days.

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

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

Fifthly, the binary concept of centre and periphery has acquired importance in postcolonial thinking. In colonial education, culture and epistemology, Britain and France in particular, constitute the 'centre' and the whole of non-West, is known as the 'periphery'. Although the concept relating to centre-periphery division was grown with the colonization project of Britain in the seventeenth century, it becomes fashionable, powerful and far more relevant when English language and literature were introduced for 'civilizing' the natives in the nineteenth century for colonial reason. Colonial narratives presumably project the people in the centre as the natural occupant of political, economic, cultural and psychological resources of the people in the periphery by virtue of their racial and cultural superiority. And because of

harsh and pervasive domination and hegemonic surveillance imposed upon people in the periphery their free voice is hardly heard and they get speechless. In her postcolonial writing Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak has offered a very interesting discussion about how the sub-altern loses their ability to speak about themselves in a socio-cultural and political regime which is not their own but owned by the elite in the centre.

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

reconstructed in view of local socio-political and cultural context and circumstances. This effort or the outcome of this effort will facilitate the intervention of the East in the domain of the dominant discourse of the West and thus the prospect of redevelopment of the history and content of the non-western traditions will be brightened in this process. This attempt taken or to be taken by the perceptible actors in the field history, literature, politics, art and culture is definitely an attempt of protest and resistance against cultural supremacy of the colonizers. This attempt decentres the centre and asserts the identity of the periphery.

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

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

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

Finally, postcolonial thought has been an obvious powerful inspiration for anti-colonial nationalism and anti colonial movement of the countries once colonized and now belonging to the third world. The multi-cultural and pluralist consciousness as implicit in postcolonial thinking contains the power to guide the states now independent to fight against unequal distribution of global power and totalizing agenda of economic globalization sponsored by the big capitalist states seeking to destroy the autonomous identity and existential plurality upon which human civilization is based.

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## 10.4 Limitations of Postcolonial Perspective

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

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

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

Thirdly, the postcolonial theory is no any well-knit, structured and systematic perspective with definite message either. The protagonists and proponents of this theory are influenced by several ideological systems sometimes contending one another. Apart from it, several diversified concepts and experiences grown from the

several contexts of colonization and decolonialization, the proponents have used to explain their specific position in regard to the content of this theory. It results in making this theory a bit complex for students of social and political theory.

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

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

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## 10.5 Conclusion

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

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## 10.6 Summing Up

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- Postcolonialism is a recent critical perspective in the study of political theory. Several thinkers and writers of postcolonialism like Frantz Fanon, Edward W. Said, Homi K. Bhaba, Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak and many others, despite diverse orientations among them, have tried to describe their broad argument within the framework of post colonialism.
- Imitations of the in that the West, and the experience of the colonial period, had tried to control and occupy the realm of mind, psychology, language and culture of the colonized for the purpose of institutionalizing the colonial rule and domination. This rule and domination have their continuing impact upon the people of the former colonies which now acquired statehood.
- Unearthing the ideological disguises behind colonization and relative significance of the process like hybridization and mimicry having their direct and indirect impact on decolonization are discussed extensively in this theory from various epistemological standpoints.
- However, some critics have identified certain limitations and this theory has rediscovers the fact that those who rule construct ideologies or discourses manufacturing consent in favour of the rulers.

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## 10.7 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

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

### Short Questions :

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

**Objective Questions :**

1. What is the central theme of postcolonialism?
2. What according to Edward W. Said, is underlying theme of orientalism?

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**10.8 Further Reading**

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1. Gandhi Leela, *Postcolonial Theory : A Critical Introduction*, Oxford, New York : Columbia University Press, 1998.
2. Basu, Pradip, *Postmodernism, Marxism, Postcolonialism*, Kolkata, Avenel Press, 2010.
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## **Unit 11 : Concept of Freedom**

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### **Structure**

#### **11.1 Objective**

#### **11.2 Introduction**

#### **11.3 Meaning of Freedom**

##### **11.3.1 Rousseau's concept of freedom**

##### **11.3.2 Locke's concept of freedom**

##### **11.3.3 Montesquieu and Adam Smith on freedom**

##### **11.3.4 Hegel's concept of freedom**

##### **11.3.5 Socialist and Marxist concept of freedom**

##### **11.3.6 Anarchist conception of freedom**

##### **11.3.7 Libertarian notion of freedom**

##### **11.3.8 Feminist notion of freedom**

#### **11.4 Concept of negative freedom**

#### **11.5 Basic features of negative freedom**

#### **11.6 Berlin's exposition of negative freedom**

#### **11.7 Concept of positive freedom**

#### **11.8 J.S.Mill's concept of positive liberty**

#### **11.9 Marxist notion of positive liberty**

#### **11.10 Amartya Sen's concept of freedom as development**

#### **11.11 Conclusion**

#### **11.12 Summing up**

#### **11.13 Probable Questions**

#### **11.14 Further Reading**

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### **11.1 Objective**

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- After going through this unit the learners will be familiar with : meaning and

evolution of the concept of freedom.

- The different conceptions of freedom.
- The concept of negative and positive freedom.

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## 11.2 Introduction

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Liberty and freedom are often used interchangeably though for many, freedom refers to a situation while liberty symbolizes a state of mind. Berlin declares that the two words ‘mean the same’ but clarifies that liberty tends to be used in legal and political contexts while the term freedom is used in philosophical sense.

A more appropriate difference is provided by Pitkin who being influenced by Arendt points out that while liberty implies protection from state interference, freedom generally means active involvement in politics. Freedom is a complex concept that contains within it two basic ideas, both independent and interdependent. One meaning of freedom is autonomy or rightful self-government. The other meaning is the overall ability to do or choose or achieve things that can be called ‘optionality’.

Freedom, may thus be defined as a quality of human being, as in only a human being as distinguished from other living beings, is capable of enjoying freedom. Freedom may also be defined as a quality of human being manifested in man’s capacity for obtaining scientific knowledge of laws of nature and applying them for the benefit of mankind. In other words, human being’s ability to gain scientific knowledge is the source of their freedom.

Freedom may also be perceived as a human condition marking man’s ability to fulfil his self-appointed goals and the state is not expected to interfere in this matter or should help in developing people’s ability by setting up a welfare state.

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## 11.3 Meaning of the word Freedom

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### 1.3.1 Rousseau’s concept of freedom

Notion of free will and freedom forms the bedrock of western political theory and society. One of the earliest conceptions of freedom defines it as obedience to a higher authority espoused by collectivist thinkers of both left and right. The earliest exponent of this view is Rousseau, for whom true freedom consists in obeying the general will that is devoid of particularistic and selfish elements and expressed in a democratic assembly of equals. A deviant is compelled to obey the law or ‘forced to be free’. An

important prerequisite for his conception of freedom is a substantive measure of social and economic equality.

### **11.3.2 Locke's concept of freedom**

For the liberals, liberty is possible and worthwhile only within a framework of law. It is best elaborated in Locke's famous phrase, "end of law is, not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom.". Locke gave an economic dimension to liberty when he explained labour as the unquestioned property of the labourer and said that each person has the right to property by the virtue of his labour. He considered the relationship of individuals with the political authority as moral and deriving from God, who had created them and to whom they owe the duty to preserve themselves, thus explicitly excluding the freedom to kill one self or others or enslave others. Locke reiterated that personal independence – the right to live with dignity and with reasonable economic comfort is a fundamental human right. He emphasized on consent as the basis of legitimate political authority, thereby specifying the limits of political power and the ambit of personal liberty in a liberal society. He portrayed the liberal state as a minimal and constitutional state, based on rule of law.

### **11.3.3 Montesquieu and Adam Smith on freedom**

Montesquieu underlined the importance of safeguards like the written constitution, separation of powers, checks and balances, precise legal procedures, clear specification of crimes and independence of judiciary for the preservation of liberty. Adam Smith linked freedom with opulence, regarding the two "as the greatest blessings" that human being can possess. He held that true freedom is possible through commerce. He considered dependency as degrading, thereby equating freedom with independence.

### **11.3.4 Hegel's concept of freedom**

For Hegel, the state is always infallible and only the state knows what is in individual's interest. The state is divine and therefore, the individuals have no rights outside the state or against the state. Freedom of the individual lies in the complete obedience of the laws of the state. State is a super organism in which no one has any individual preferences different from those of the state. Real freedom of the individual can be realised only in the state.

### **11.3.5 Socialist and Marxist concept of freedom**

While the liberal view of freedom is essentially freedom from interference, the Marxist view drawing upon the philosophies of Spinoza, Rousseau, Kant and Hegel defines freedom as self-determination and as self-realization. It sees freedom as a

removal of obstacles to human emancipation allowing the full flowering of the human powers. For the socialists, only when class divisions and wage labour based on private property leading to competitiveness and selfishness are abolished, a truly human society based on fellowship, love and cooperative instinct may be created. Only collective efforts can overcome such hurdles and freedom as self-determination, is collective in the sense, that there is an organized human effort over both nature and social conditions of production. To Marx and Engles, destruction of capitalism and creation of communist society embodies collective control, collective individuality and personal freedom.

Marxist concern with a wider and richer view of freedom leads the Marxists to underestimate the nature and extent of civil and economic freedom that the individuals enjoy in liberal – capitalistic societies. Marx had very little faith in mechanisms like constitution, rule of law or charter of rights. He dismissed these as a façade of bourgeois exploitation and did not acknowledge even in limited sense, the protection they lend to individual against arbitrary rule and physical harm. The Marxists therefore tend to forget that these civil freedoms were earned as a result of centuries of unremitting popular struggles.

Miliband, therefore, rightly pointed out that the task of Marxist politics should be to defend these freedoms; and to make possible their extension and enlargement by the removal of all sorts of obstacles. Socialists and Marxists of all shades regard economic freedom as primary and consider political and civil liberties to be possible only with the abolition of the class boundaries.

Many western socialists argue that political freedom is valuable and ought to be coalesced with welfare measures. The socialists believe it is not the state, but rather economic exploitation that presents challenge to individual's self-realisation and material sufficiency. They profess a more deterministic view of human nature than liberals and deny a direct co-relationship between choice and freedom.

### **11.3.6 Anarchist notion of freedom**

The extreme left wing ideology, anarchism desires to do away with all forms of authority, whether that of a state, church or a parent, since authority and discipline, imposed from outside always curtail freedoms. Like the Marxists, the Anarchists too desire the abolition of state power after the destruction of capitalism and describe the post capitalist Anarchist society as being truly free. However, Anarchism remains untested in practice.

### **11.3.7 Libertarian notion of freedom**

Libertarianism considers subjective freedom as the highest social and political value. It believes in freeing people not only from traditional political institutions but also from the constraints imposed by the importance they attach and the power that they attribute to ineffectual practices and institutions namely, religion, family and social customs. Libertarians demand maximization of the realm of individual freedom and minimization of the scope of public authority.

### **11.3.8 Feminist notion of freedom**

The feminists on the other hand accepts the intrinsic link between freedom and equality. The early liberal feminists like Wollstonecraft and Mary Astell used the idea of equality to demand recognition of women as human subjects with agency and intellect, an aspect which J.S.Mill later acknowledged. Contemporary feminism defines freedom as empowerment, requiring both negative liberty's absence of constraints and positive liberty's community assistance.

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## **11.4 Concept of Negative Freedom**

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By negative liberty one usually understands the absence of restraints or absolute non-interference. Negative liberty is very closely associated with negative freedom. The question is : what is the actual extent of the area or the realm, where an individual is absolutely free to do what he pleases, without any external interference? Perhaps, negative freedom is best understood in the words of Berlin, as he seeks answer to the question, 'Over what area am I master?' It basically rests on two basic premises;

- a) Each person knows his interests best. It is based upon the assumption that every individual is a rational agent capable of deliberations and making informed decisions.
- b) The state should not interfere unnecessarily in an individual's life, neither should it try to dictate ends and purposes to the individuals.

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## **11.5 Basic features of negative freedom as enunciated by the liberals**

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Liberal writers often use the term liberty and freedom interchangeably. For them, liberty is of supreme importance and they want all public policies to be solely guided

by it. Of all forms of liberty, the liberals value the individual liberty above all. The essence of the liberal thought is perhaps best captured by the Atlantic Charter (1941) which contains the declaration of the 'Four Freedoms'. These are : freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from fear and want. The first two freedoms embody the negative aspect of liberty, i.e., it prohibits or restricts the state from meddling in individual's life and preventing him from achieving life goals determined by him.

The concept of negative liberty or freedom starts on the basic premise that the individual is the best judge of his interests and most capable of choosing his life goals. It evolved as a consequence of long struggle against the tyrannical and unjust powers of the state. The individual had to put up a long fight to carve a private sphere for himself, both in the economic and political sphere. Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Bentham, Henry Sidgwick, Herbert Spencer, J.S.Mill are all classical theorists of the concept of negative liberty.

In the contemporary times, the idea has again been brought to lime light by libertarian theorists like Hayek, Nozick and Milton Friedman.

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## **11.6 Berlin's exposition of negative freedom**

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Berlin defined negative liberty as the opportunity to act and not the action itself. He propounded an 'opportunity concept of freedom' which lays more importance on availability rather than exercise of opportunity. The main problem with this conception is its indifference to action. It does not distinguish between one's desire to write poetry and to kill himself. Berlin describes negative liberty as presence between alternatives. For Berlin, negative liberty has three characteristics. First, it implies freedom from interference with regard to one's capacity to choose and absence of restraints. Berlin is of the opinion that the individual is the best judge of his interests and must be free to pursue his desires without any interference from others. Negative liberty may be understood best by asking two pertinent questions, i.e., freedom from what and whom. Berlin described negative liberty as freedom from any form of interference. He felt that the concept of negative liberty is distinctively modern concept and its second distinct feature is its emphasis on autonomy. He opined that it is most amenable to the liberal concerns of diversity and toleration. Negative liberty also concerns itself with deliberative acts of omissions and interventions. Described as choice among options, 'unhindered by any form of obstacles, it is debatable as to what may be regarded as a hindrance. Berlin's third proposition with regard to negative liberty is of supreme significance for it emphasises that negative liberty is not

incompatible with certain forms of autocracy nor is it intricately linked with the concept of democracy and self-government. Berlin aptly pointed that negative liberty or freedom to choose is an inalienable trait of a human being and essential for his self-development.

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## **11.7 Concept of Positive Freedom**

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Positive liberty signifies the freedom ‘to do’ certain things and pursuing of rational goals and ends. It assumes that the individuals possess a higher self and a lower self. For positive liberty to blossom, the higher rational self should prevail over the lower self. Its essence is wonderfully captured in Berlin’s words, “The positive sense of the word ‘liberty’ derives from the wish on the part of the individual to be his own master...I wish above all, to be conscious of myself, as a thinking, willing, active being...”, bearing responsibility for his choices and able to explain them by reference to his own ideas and purposes. Therefore, it implies not only freedom from external interference but also the idea of self-mastery where the higher self is expected to be in command of the lower self. Unlike negative liberty, it is also amenable to the idea of directing the individual by the law or elite. It surmises that as long as the law directs the individuals to rational ends and goals it does not oppress them, it can act as an agent of liberation.

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## **11.8 J.S. Mill’s concept of positive liberty**

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Positive freedom builds upon the idea of collective control over common life. It is acknowledged that it might involve certain degree of coercion, however it is justified by the larger social good expected to be gained. J.S.Mill compared the development of an individual to that of a plant and firmly believed that individuals like the plants must be allowed to develop independently of their own accord following their inner logic. J.S.Mill opined that personal growth must be innate, i.e., it must emanate from within the individual and must never be externally imposed. Though, the emphasis on non-interference portrayed Mill to be a negative liberty theorist, later he realised that it resulted in the suppression of the economically vulnerable classes and with time changed his stance. He later acknowledged that certain amount of external interference could be permitted if it resulted in cultivation of certain desirable faculties in man. He also believed in elite guidance as he felt the educated were better endowed to guide the rest. This opened the possibility of projecting him as a propagator of positive liberty too.

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## 11.9 Marxist notion of positive liberty

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The Marxists believe that common good can only be achieved by creating socio-economic conditions conducive to the enjoyment of freedom within the society. These conditions involve material means of satisfaction of wants and opportunity for self-development. The key to freedom lies in establishing a just system of production that shall ensure equitable distribution of goods for the satisfaction of everybody's needs. The Marxists opine that the capitalist mode of production is not at all conducive to the conditions of human freedom. It is characterized by constraint or necessity. Necessity denotes conditions under which the life of man is governed by the laws of nature, which exist independently of man's will. Engels aptly pointed out in his *Anti Duhring*, '...Freedom does not consist in any dream of independence from natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws...'. Engels further felt that it applied to both the external laws of nature and our internal laws. He thus wrote, 'Freedom, therefore consists in the control over ourselves and over our external nature...'. The Marxists came up with a scientific analysis of forces of production which revealed that only socialization of the means of production can help society to tide over the crisis created by inequality and various 'non freedoms'.

Marx, in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, laid down the foundation of ethical basis of socialism and the humanist foundations of freedom. He was very critical of capitalism for its dehumanizing effects. He realised that the capitalist system deformed the productive capacity in various ways. It transformed men into mere machines and made it emotionally impossible for him to relate to his family, friends, work, creation and nature. Only by replacing the unjust and dehumanizing capitalist mode of production, with the socialist system of production could the true conditions of freedom be achieved.

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## 11.10 Amartya Sen's concept of 'freedom as development'

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Amartya Sen came up with the 'capabilities approach' to champion the cause of everybody's share in the process and fruits of development. This approach insists on allocation of various goods and other benefits according to differential human capabilities of its beneficiaries. Each person is to be given adequate additional resources to enable him to develop his capabilities so that he can lead a respectable social life. The impact of this approach has been so pervasive that it got reflected in the United Nations Development Programme, which adopted certain 'capability indicators' to

gauge human development in various parameters.

Sen lamented that while the world is witnessing flourishing of wealth, improved life styles and the ideals of political liberty has gained wide recognition and acceptance complimented by the values of democracy and human rights, a vast section of the humanity is still immersed in the sea of deprivation and denied elementary freedom. They remained shackled in the chains of poverty, social deprivation, and political tyranny. The world is still held hostage to famines, widespread hunger, violation of human rights, degradation of environment and ill treatment of women. People struggle to get access to clean potable water, children are dying due to malnutrition, and high maternal mortality is still a social reality. Sen persuasively argued that freedom is the ultimate goal of all the social and economic arrangements and the most efficient means of realizing general welfare. Sen posited that the various social institutions like the market, political parties, legislatures, judiciary and media contribute to the development of man by enhancing his freedom and these are in turn sustained by the social values. Sen, tried to link values, institutions, development and freedom in an elaborate analytical framework. Development in this sense refers to the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and opportunity of exercising their potential combined with the faculty of reason. Therefore, in Sen's view, political and cultural factors apart from the economic criteria comprise significant criteria of freedom. In short, Sen equated freedom with the notion of social justice.

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## 11.11 Conclusion

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Freedom has been understood differently by different strands of thought. It is a fundamental concept in democratic thought. In its common understanding liberty means absence of restraints. It signifies a condition in which an individual is free to take any action without constraint outside. However freedom can never be absolute. Reasonable restrictions on individual freedom is justified on the ground that they provide the conditions in which individual can enjoy freedom without conflict. The idea of freedom as the absence of restraints is associated with negative concept freedom. Positive concept of freedom, on the other hand, takes into account conditions which enable an individual to be actually free. The idea of the welfare State is premised on this idea which requires the state to create conditions within which individual can be free to act and develop themselves John Stuart Mill and Isaiah Berlin have attempted to reconcile the two concepts of freedom. Marxists believe

that freedom can never be enjoyed in a capitalist society. Capitalism, they argue, hinders self-realisation.

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## 11.12 Summing up

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Freedom contains within it two basic ideas, one is autonomy of the individual and the other is the ability to do or choose.

- For the liberals, freedom is only possible within the framework of laws and institutions.
- Marxists believe that capitalist society cannot ensure individual freedom. It separates individual from Society and from his own nature.
- Negative freedom means noninterference; the absence of external constraints on the individual.
- Positive freedom is linked to the achievement of some identifiable goal, usually personal developments, self-realisation or self-mastery.

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## 11.13 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type questions :

1. Explain Berlin's formulation of the idea of negative freedom.
2. Examine Marxist idea of positive liberty.

### Short questions :

1. What is meant by negative freedom.
2. What does Amartya Sen's concept of freedom as development imply?

### Objective questions :

1. Which philosopher's concept of freedom involves obedience to the general will?
2. Who linked freedom with commerce and opulence?

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## 11.14 Further Reading

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1. Bhargavas, R and Acharya, A(ed) Political Theory, An Introduction, Pearson, New Delhi, 2008.
2. Berlin, I., Four Essays on Liberty, Oxford University Press, 1969
3. Gauba, o.p., An Introduction to Political Theory, Mayur Paperbacks, New Delhi, 2017.
4. Ramaswamy S., Political Theory, Ideas and concepts, Second Edition, PHI Learning Private Limited, New Delhi, 2017.

## **Unit 12 : Concept of Equality, Forms of Equality–Formal Equality, Equality of Opportunity; Political Equality.**

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### **Structure**

- 12.1 Objective**
- 12.2 Introduction**
- 12.3 Liberal notion of equality**
- 12.4 Stoics and Cicero on equality**
- 12.5 Ideas of Kant, Marx, Tawney on equality**
- 12.6 Idea of Formal Equality**
- 12.7 Idea of Political Equality**
- 12.8 Idea of Equality of Opportunity**
- 12.9 Conclusion**
- 12.10 Summing Up**
- 12.11 Probable Questions**
- 12.12 Further Reading**

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### **12.1 Objective**

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- The main aim is to present a short history of evolution of the term equality by studying the idea as propounded by the likes of Hobbes, Rousseau, Hume, Hart, Stoics, Cicero followed by the ideas of the utilitarian's, Kantians and the Marxists.
- The learners will be familiar with the different types of equality like the formal equality, political equality and equality of opportunity.

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### **12.2 Introduction**

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Equality has occupied a pivotal position in the history of moral and political philosophy and Aristotle had warned rightly that it had been a cause of many a wars.

According to Richard Henry Tawney, inequality was very easy and it was akin to floating with the tide, whereas, equality was much more difficult as it was like swimming against the tide. Sartori, described equality as a protest par excellence, for it epitomised and stimulated revolt against fate and chance, against accidental disparity, which crystallised privilege and unjust power.

Equality is a very complex concept, implying on the one hand sameness and justice on the other. One should comprehend at the outset that demands for equality never embodies desire for absolute equality. In the demand for equality, there is a burning desire to undo the social and economic disparities that has been caused by unjust social arrangements, without disrespecting the natural differences in human capacities and talents. Sushila Ramaswamy pointed out, that the concern of most political theories is how to create equality while accepting the natural inequalities and to try and ensure equality without violating or infringing liberty and individuality.

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## 12.3 Liberal notion of Equality

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Ancient societies were very divided and unequal. It regarded some as more equal than the rest. Equality never implied sameness in various capacities or abilities, as manifested in intelligence, wealth, social status and power. The modern era with its emphasis on rationality makes people comprehend that man in reality differs little, it is the situation or the circumstances which creates the difference.

Despite the differences in human beings pertaining to their physical features and mental endowments, it is still claimed that ‘all are created equal’. This claim is elucidated by Hobbes who felt that in spite of the natural differences in physical powers and mental endowments, all were equal in their ability and also equal in being able to attain the ends they aspired for. He aptly pointed out, that even the weakest among men is capable of killing the strongest by the use of his cunning. Rousseau, on his *Discourses on the Origin of Inequality*, pointed out two types of inequalities observed in social life. One was natural inequality, created by nature that made some men stronger, intelligent, and benevolent than others. Apart from it was the conventional inequality, which was created by man himself, which was reflected in the differences of social wealth, prestige and glory. Recognition of this conventional man made inequalities provided for the scope to review the basis of social distinctions and to restructure social relations according to the new concepts of social justice. Rousseau’s thoughts inspired the *French Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen* (1789) which claimed, “Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions can be based only upon public utility”.

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## **12.4 Stoics and Cicero on Equality**

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Hume in the eighteenth century and Hart in the twentieth century reiterated similar sentiments as expressed by Hobbes. The Stoics and Cicero advanced a claim to equality on the basis of common human nature. The natural rights theorists advanced a case for equal rights on the basis of equal ability of all to understand their rights and obligations thereby mounting an attack on the paternalistic governments. The Utilitarian's observed that all human beings have equal capacity for experiencing pleasure and pain and therefore while calculating pleasure and pain each is to count for one and no one for more than one.

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## **12.5 Ideas of Kantians, Marxists and Tawney on Equality**

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The Kantians defends the proposition of equal moral worth of each individuals stressing on the need to treat each individual as ends in themselves and not as means only. They presume that being of equal moral worth, each individual is capable of formulating and adhering to moral laws. The Marxists accept equality on the basis of labour that each human being is capable of rendering and their power to reproduce their own species. Exponents of equality like Tawney, emphasised on the need of various social institutions to accentuate and reinforce the 'common humanity' that unites people.

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## **12.6 Idea of Formal Equality**

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When applying the principle of equality to the various spheres of social life we come across various forms of equality. For instance, when all people are subject to similar rule, without any form of discrimination it is a manifestation of formal equality. For example, people forming a queue to buy movie tickets. They stand according to their turn. Nobody is differentiated on the basis of caste, class, gender, social class, ethnicity etc. It is essential to distinguish between formal and substantive equality. While formal equality implies absence of any form of discrimination in making things available to all, substantive equality reserves certain benefits for the weaker and deprived sections with lesser effort or at lesser cost. When the facilities of education, medical benefits, transportation and entertainment are open to all who can afford to pay for it, it is an example of formal equality. When the state pays scholarships to the needy students or provides free medical facilities and vaccines to the poor, it

is an example of substantive equality. Broadly speaking, both legal as well as political equality comes within the purview of formal equality.

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## 12.7 Idea of Political Equality

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We shall now concentrate on political equality. It denotes equality of political rights of the citizens. It is manifested in the demand for equal rights for all to vote and select their own representatives and to be elected to various public offices. It therefore stresses that nobody shall be debarred from voting or holding public offices on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth etc. It further demands that there shall be no privileged classes and the rules would not bestow special favours to any particular class in the society. Political equality is based on the assumption that all men are rational being capable of making deliberations and informed choices irrespective of their physical and mental capabilities, educational qualifications etc. It also proceeds from the assumption that when equal political rights are extended to all individuals they will be able to attain general welfare and shall be able to prevail over the policy makers to make laws securing common good.

The demand for political equality originated along with legal equality and was undifferentiated in the beginning. D. D. Raphael pointed out that when the French revolutionaries were demanding equal rights they were in fact demanding political equality as they were demanding removal of special privileges confined to the wealthy and the propertied. Of late, political equality has come to encompass universalization of franchise, equal democratic rights of the citizens, equal freedom to hold and express political opinions without fear and favour along with equal right to form associations to influence political decisions.

In fact, the desire for political equality led to the establishment of democracy with its emphasis on equal human rights in the western world. However, only political equality seemed hollow and meaningless without being accompanied by socio-economic equality. It had been anticipated by Alexis de Tocqueville, who realised that only political equality without accompanying socio-economic equality would not be acceptable. He had predicted that the democratic revolution, would be followed by a second phase, marked by the struggle between haves and the have not's. Thus Tocqueville had anticipated the growth of socialist and Marxist theories, whose sole aim is to correct the prevailing socio-economic injustices and disparities.

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## 12.8 Idea of Equality of Opportunity

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Equality of opportunity is mostly associated with the liberal democratic tradition. It implies that access to important social institutions shall remain open to all on universalistic grounds. It would be prudent to distinguish between equality of opportunity and that of outcome. Equality of outcome is the demand of hardcore egalitarians, since men differ not only in their family and social backgrounds, but also in terms of their talents and efforts. Equal distribution of rewards is bound to kill the incentive among the more meritorious. This would end up in lesser production and lower level of excellence, ultimately resulting in the impoverishment of the society. This line of argument compels people to favour 'equality of opportunity' to 'equality of outcome'.

The American and French revolution gave further impetus to the demand of a career open to talent. They favoured acquired status i.e., administrative and professional positions open to all with talent irrespective of their birth and family status, over ascribed status. Plato may be heralded as the earliest exponent of this theory, as he proposed meritocracy in the form of philosophic rule, which was to be realised through an educational system that was to provide equal chance to the talented children of all classes to achieve unequal social positions. The debate on equality of opportunity has also helped in the development of modern educational institutions and meritocracy that recruits and promotes people on the basis of their intelligence and talent regardless of their family connections and wealth.

O. P. Gauba argues that the principle of equality of opportunity may be applied in two distinct situations. A) a competitive situation and B) a non-competitive situation. In a competitive situation, equality of opportunity implies access to scarce good or prize. In a non-competitive situation, it implies equal access to essential goods and services depending on one's ability and effort. Success in any field, like law, medicine, academics is its example. In a competitive situation, all the competitors should be placed in identical or near identical situations. For example, all the sprinters have to undergo compulsory drug tests to ascertain they have not taken drugs and are therefore not gaining undue advantage. In a non-competitive situation, all participants should get a minimum support plus 'separate plus equal' facilities to prove their worth.

Advocates of equal opportunity argue that the government's task is to create equal opportunities for its citizens. It is up to the individual to decide, whether to use an opportunity or discard it. Equality of opportunity is not likely to result in equality of outcome. In short, equality of opportunity calls for creating conditions in which everyone has the same starting point or equal life chances. It seeks to reduce impact

of inequalities attached to social, cultural and economic backgrounds of various persons but agrees to give them differential rewards according to their differential talents, skills and efforts. It also implies that those who had a poor start in life because of long standing social inequalities, to be given some special concession, such as waiver in educational fees, relaxation of age limits in case of competitive exams and promotions or reservation of seats or posts. It wants constructive and effective steps to be taken by the state to ensure educational and cultural development of the marginalized sections of the society along with their economic upliftment. In this way, equality of opportunity calls for extending the process of 'equalizing' to the roots of our society.

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## 12.9 Conclusion

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Equality is one of the most prominent ideals of the present world. Liberty and equality together describe the conditions of human emancipation. Together they represent the voice of the oppressed. Equality is more of a prescriptive term than a descriptive one. It basically upholds the faith that since the physical, emotional and intellectual needs of all men are similar, hence all must be treated equally. It presupposes the equal moral worth of all individuals.

There are various dimensions of equality. The notion of formal equality treats everyone equally, irrespective of the differences in the people's background. It implies application of similar rules to all persons, without any discrimination. Legal and political equality are its components.

Legal equality grants equal legal status to all irrespective of the differences in their birth, physical and mental capacities and other differences. Political equality grants every one the right to vote someone into public office and the right to compete for the office. Political equality has been achieved after a long struggle. At present there are no discriminations in respect of voting right in a democratic state based on gender, social back ground and property considerations.

Equality of opportunity is usually associated with the liberal democratic tradition. It implies in principle that access to important social institutions shall be open to all universally giving recognition to achievement and talent. It gained popularity during the American and French revolutions. It has helped in the growth of modern educational institutions based on meritocracy, as people are now recruited and promoted on the basis of their talent regardless of their family connections and wealth.

It is to be noted, however, that equality mostly means equality of condition and not that of outcome. Ironically, the more is the equality of condition the more is the inequality in outcome, exemplified by the existence of the richest families in the world. To change the scenario, the need of the hour is sweeping governmental policies and actions.

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## 12.10 Summing Up

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- Equality is a complex concept, encompassing two components. In one sense it implies sameness or identity and in another sense justice.
- It seeks to undo the large varieties of socio-economic disparities prevalent.
- Hobbes was of the opinion that all men were equal as even the weakest had the ability and the cunning to kill the strongest.
- Stoics and Cicero forwarded the case for equality on the basis of common human nature.
- The Utilitarian's believed that all human beings have equal capacity for experiencing pain and pleasure and so should be regarded as equals.
- The Kantians believed that all the individuals were of equal moral worth and therefore should be treated as ends in themselves.
- The Marxists too accept the equality of human essence that is manifested in labour and people's capacity to reproduce themselves.
- There are many dimensions of equality. Under formal equality all the people are treated equally, i.e., same rule is applied to all despite the differences in their back ground.
- Political equality has been won after prolonged struggle. It implies the right to vote someone into office and the right to stand for office oneself.
- Equality of opportunity is associated with the liberal democratic traditions.
- It implies that access to all important social institutions shall be open to all on universalistic ground on the basis of achievement and talent.

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## 12.11 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

- 1) Elaborate the idea of equality of opportunity.

- 2) Explain the various forms of equality as far as possible in your own words.
- 3) Does equality of opportunity guarantee equality of outcome? Explain.
- 4) Explain the idea of political equality. Do you think it is a reality in today's world?

**Short Type Questions :**

- 1) Discuss the evolution of the idea of equality.
- 2) What do you understand by formal equality? Elaborate.

**Objective Questions :**

- 1) What is meant by natural rights?
- 2) What does the idea of equality of opportunity imply?
- 3) What is meant by formal equality?

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**12.12 Further Reading**

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- 1) Gauba O.P., *An Introduction to Political Theory*, Mayur Paperbacks, New Delhi, 2017.
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## **Unit 13 : Concept of Justice**

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### **Structure**

- 13.1 Objective**
- 13.2 Introduction**
- 13.3 The meaning of Justice through the Age**
- 13.4 Greek concept of Justice**
- 13.5 Roman and mediaval concept of Justice**
- 13.6 The Liberal concept of Justice**
- 13.7 The Marxist concept of Justice**
- 13.8 Alternative Views**
- 13.9 The Characteristic Features of Justice**
- 13.10 Rawls on Justice**
- 13.11 Characteristics of Rawlsian Justice**
- 13.12 A Critique of Rawls**
- 13.13 Conclusion**
- 13.14 Summing Up**
- 13.15 Probable Questions**
- 13.16 Further Reading**

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### **13.1 Objective**

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This unit deals with the important aspects of justice. After going through this unit learner will be familiar with:

- the meaning of justice.
- the interpretation of justice given by the great political thinkers in different

ages of political history.

- the characteristic features of justice.
- and Rawls's theory of Justice.

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## 13.2 Introduction

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Just society and just state are basic essentials for good living. It means justice is one of the fundamentals of human life and harmonious living. However, to understand justice is a complex process as human civilizations of all ages and continents offer varied meanings of justice. For instance, to someone, justice means giving others what they are due or entitled to. In modern society, on the other hand, justice is a distributional concept and it is concerned with distribution of scarce resources. If resources are abundant and people are benevolent, David Hume observes, “justice and injustice would be equally unknown among mankind”. Indeed, historical context and ideologies give justice complex and counteracting connotations. In other words, justice is a dynamic concept. Yet we need to know it because we need to live with it.

Primarily, justice is a moral concept but it also a political concept because without political will and institution it could not be delivered to all in a human society. In fact, the derivative meaning of justice is ‘to bind or to tie together’. ‘Jus’ also means ‘Tie’ or ‘Bond’ as well as right or law. So, the state plays a great role as right or law cannot be guaranteed without this powerful political institution. Similarly, the state cannot be a humane institution without justice. St. Augustine, like Plato and Aristotle, rightly enquired upon ‘justice removed, then, what are kingdoms but great bands of robbers?’ It is an age-old tradition that views justice as basic to the validation of political authority. The same tone was reflected in the writings of Manu, “Do not destroy Dharma, so that you may not be destroyed”. The main objective of this essay is therefore to understand this prime thing of human life, justice – its meaning, features, and different views of justice.

Justice is also required to synthesize different political values. Ernest Barker points out that all values like liberty, equality and fraternity are to be adjusted and readjusted with reference to contexts. As claims of one value may contradict others, adjustment is indispensable for harmonization of different values as well as different aspects of society. He opines that the primary function of justice is synthesis of liberty, equality and fraternity. It is ‘the union and adjusted whole of all political values which are

staking a claim for recognition'. In this way, equal conditions for the development of personality of all can be ensured. So, justice is the great balancer, adjuster, reconciler and synthesizer of values. In fact, it goes beyond these values and balances each of them.

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### **13.3 The Meaning of Justice through the Ages**

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Justice is the basis of good state and it is also a pillar of ideal society. The ancient Indian scriptures gave utmost importance to justice. So, the king should favor and deliver justice to its subjects. In other words, 'Nayadharma' or justice was the basis of human life in the Indian tradition. It is later reflected in the Gandhian concept of 'Ramarajya' and in AmartyaSen's idea of justice. Justice tries to reconcile the individual rights with the social good. It reconciles the claims of one person with another.

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### **13.4 Greek concept of Justice**

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However, the concept of justice takes different meanings in different historical context. Since the age of Plato (427 BC-347 BC) right up to the 21st century, it has been defined in various ways. Plato equates justice with discipline, judiciousness, self-control, bravery and loyalty. Yet, Plato was convinced, despite the individual views offered by Cephalus, Polemarchus and others, that Justice is the mother of all virtues and it will be achieved through dutifulness to one's own class functions. So, for Plato, justice is a virtue that can establish a rational order – each one should perform its appropriate role without meddling with the function of other parts. In Aristotle's opinion, justice denotes what is lawful and fair, that is, equitable distributions and the removal of what is inequitable. It is called corrective justice. For him Justice lies in incorporating concerns of equality, proportionality and maintenance of equilibrium in society.

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### **13.5 Roman and Medieval concept of Justice**

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Cicero observes, "Justice is intrinsic goods". It remains implicit in our values and cannot be detached from life and society. Carrying on the Greek tradition, Augustine argues 'justice is the constant and perpetual will to render to each his dues'. So, in

delivering justice each person matters and all persons should be treated equally or with consistency. However, besides consistency, relevance is another important condition of justice: for relevant reasons a person may be treated differently rather than equally. To Aquinas, justice is that rational mean between opposite sorts of injustice, involving proportional distributions and reciprocal transactions.

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### 13.6 The Liberal concept of Justice

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With the advent of materialist tradition in the West, the meaning of justice acquires complex undertone – while going through a process of secularization, justice has been conceptualized with reference to the class interests of the dominant groups or ethnocentrism. Far Hobbes, justice is a simulated virtue but is a necessity for civil society and it can be actualized through the function of the voluntary agreements of the social contract. The early utilitarian, like Hume argues that “public utility is the sole origin of justice.” So, to them protecting property is a noteworthy public utility service of justice. In consonance with the spirit of individualism, Kant observes that justice is a virtue by which people respect others’ freedom, autonomy, and dignity by not interfering with their voluntary actions, so long as those do not violate others’ rights. The liberal proponent like J.S. Mill again views justice in terms of social utilities that foster and protect human liberty.

What does remain implicit in these views is the insistence to judge justice in terms of legality. It branches out of monistic concept of sovereignty. Thinkers like Hobbes and Austin uphold the view that ‘law is the command of the sovereign’ and is the primary source of justice. So, Leviathan can never be unjust and it is the ‘creator of right and justice’. Bentham’s utilitarian stance never disregards this sovereign monitor of pain and pleasure. He, for instance, argues that morals should not be the basis of justice and so also the natural law. In fact, the liberal thinkers, of whom Bentham is one of the forefathers, applaud law or legality as the basis of justice. While the sovereign state controls everything through law, legality as well ensures individuality: liberty of man, free market and constricted state. Mill said justice is a collective name for the most important social utilities, which are conducive to fostering and protecting human liberty. Both idealism and liberalism evince justice by the instrument of law. Therefore, equality before the law and equal treatment by the law is the basis of just society. However, Laski thinks that law devoid of justice might tend to debar sociological and ethical consideration of justice. It is equally important that the socio-economic basis of justice cannot be undermined because actualization of justice is conditioned by these factors.

Rawls tries to mitigate the contradictions in his own way. He analyzes justice in terms of maximum equal liberty pertaining to basic rights and duties for all members of society. In his writings, justice involves fairness; so the basic question of distributive justice is how resources and opportunities are divided up among the members of society. However, Rawls' conception of justice is deontological as it views priority of right over the good. The post-Rawlsian philosophers propose alternative conceptions of justice.

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### **13.7 The Marxist concept of Justice**

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To Marx and Engels, justice can be ensured only through realization of economic and social equality. Legal justice, a mainstay of liberal justice, is not an accepted form of justice because justice in capitalist society reflects class relations and so also protects class contradiction and private property. So, justice is an integral part of the superstructure. Marx believes in substantive justice which is the basic condition of economic justice. As surplus value, which is actually appropriated by the capitalists, is a means of exploitation of the working class in capitalist society, economic justice can only be ensured by creation of classless society through proletarian revolution. However, in the socialist society, due to the existence of the state, justice cannot be ensured in the true sense of the term. According to Lenin 'the first phase of communism, therefore, cannot yet provide justice and equality; difference, and unjust differences, in wealth will still persist, but exploitation of man by man will have become impossible because it will be impossible to seize the means of production'... In 'Critique of the Gotha Programme', Marx offers a principle of justice, 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'. So, Marx disregards merits or deserts, rights, entitlements, etc., as criteria for distribution of benefits and resources. Rather, needs or necessity should be the distributive principle. Hence, Marxian theory of justice stresses on the distributive nature of justice in its own way. In his words, justice entails "a fair distribution of proceeds of labour." Thus, every member of the society without any discrimination while enjoying the benefits of society must bear the burdens within the society. Or else, Marx considered justice as a sham, a mask which facilitates capitalist exploitation. The emphasis on earnings rather than liberty exposes the inner contradictions between capitalist and socialist views of justice.

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### **13.8 Alternative views**

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There are others who prefer to recommend a pluralistic view of justice. The communitarians' ideas of justice prefer the collective pursuit of virtue rather than

the defense of individual rights as a principle of social order. Sandel maintains that rights and justice depend for their justification on the moral importance of the ends they serve. 'Justice is not only about the right way to distribute things. It is also about the right way to value things'. On the other hand, to Michael Walzer, justice is a human construction, and it is doubtful that it can be made in only one way. The principles of justice are themselves pluralistic in form; that different social goods ought to be distributed for different reasons, in accordance with different procedures, by different agents; and that all these differences derive from different understandings of the social goods themselves.

There are other alternative conceptions of justice that challenge conventional liberal ideas of justice and even disregard the view that justice is anthropocentric. The first among them is the global or cosmopolitan theory of justice. It suggests that justice should not be applied to people within a specific sovereign boundary. So, it argues that application of justice must not be limited to one national boundary but it is to be extended beyond national boundaries. In fact, increasing interdependence or interrelations among the peoples or sovereign bodies require refurbishment of the idea of justice. Particularly, the North-South divide strengthens the argument for global justice.

Besides, a new futuristic study of justice could be found in the Green or ecological political thought. For a secured future of mankind, one must need to understand the justice-ecology interface. In other words, demand for applying justice for (a) living being other than human and (b) the nature as a whole is becoming a strong trend. The Green political thinkers in actuality are concerned with the application of justice to biodiversity.

Arnold Brecht tries to understand this multifaceted idea of justice with reference to the values people uphold from time to time. In his words, "One who changes from one conviction to the other will thenceforth have a different idea of justice". For instance, an authoritarian thinks of leadership as an ultimate value, so following leaders is justice. For those who uphold equality as the highest value preserving equality is justice. This again is contradicted by libertarians who give liberty not equality the highest value. Accordingly, to the hedonist, pursuing happiness of the greatest number is just; to some, majority will is just; to some others, duty not right is just. So, the idea of justice is basically dynamic and plural in meaning and content.

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## 13.9 Characteristic features of Justice

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Justice determines the way how individual people are treated. The questions of justice arise in circumstances where people put forth their claims to get freedom,

education, opportunities, resources, and others. But these claims are potentially contradictory, so people can plead to justice to resolve such contradictions by determining what each person is properly entitled to have. So, justice is a form of claims which can be duly made against the agent dispensing justice. The agent might be a person or an institution. Further, justice is a matter of obligation for the dispensing agent to provide with what is due to the masses. It is a marker of justice that the obligations it creates should be enforceable. So, justice requires an agent whose determination alters the circumstances of its objects. Again, the agent might be an individual person, or it might be a group of people, or an institution such as the state. There is a relationship between justice and the impartial and consistent application of rules. Justice is epitomized in the rule of law — as general rules impartially applied over time.

**The features of Justice are the following :**

1. The sources of justice are values and traditions of society. Not only that justice is a primary value and it has an enduring relation with other values like liberty and equality.
2. Justice is universal –it is related to all aspects of human behavior in society. It has an overarching value that synthesizes different aspects of human life.
3. Justice stands for mutual relationships of persons living in society. It is a principle of balancing or reconciling human relations in society in such a way as to enable each one to get his due rights, rewards and punishments.
4. Further, the function of justice is to harmonize individual interests with the interests of society.
5. Aim of justice is to provide equal rights, opportunities and facilities to all in a fair way.
6. Justice is a matter of each individual person being treated in the right and non-arbitrary way; there should be consistency in treatment – benefits or punishment. Accordingly, justice has to follow rules or apply laws to maintain consistency.
7. Application of justice further requires relevance. That is, justice requires equal treatment but if there are relevant reasons it may discriminate or be treated differently.
8. Again, treating differently for relevant reasons should be guided by the idea of proportion. For the sake of justice, reward and punishment is to be

proportionate to work done.

9. Further, the nature of justice often evolves out of context – justice is contextual. Situation or circumstance must be taken into consideration to deliver justice.
10. Justice has several dimensions: social justice, economic justice, political justice and legal justice.

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### 13.10 Rawls on Justice

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Rawls tries to develop a method through which acceptable principles of justice could be arrived at. He develops a contractarian theory of justice in the tradition of Locke and Rousseau. Like the contract theory, Rawls's justice veers around a central point that is, the institutional arrangement for a society. It is called 'transcendental institutionalism'. It bears two discrete characteristics: a) this approach concentrates on the idea of perfect justice and is least interested in the comparison of justice and injustice; and b) in the process of attaining perfection one should give attention to right institutions rather than to the specificity of emerging societies. Rawls is also indebted to the Kantian exposition of justice. Both original position and veil of ignorance – the conditions of Rawlsian justice – have certain proximity to Kant's interpretation of justice. For instance, the original position should be analyzed as a procedural explanation of Kantian conception of autonomy.

In his attempts to construct a theory of justice, Rawls makes an estimate of the efficacy of utilitarian mode of explanation of justice. To Rawls, equality of basic rights for all individuals should be the fundamental principle of justice – 'justice as fairness'. To the utilitarian thinkers, violation of rights of some individuals may be justified to secure the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of individuals. Rawls rather prioritizes the principle of equal rights for all, not for one particular group over another group, unless it would do grave injustice to individuals.

Rawls' 'Theory of Justice' is a product of crises of the Western world: on the one hand, uncertain future of liberal political theory and philosophy as well as behavioral and post-behavioral debate and fuming debate over American imperialist design in Vietnam, unemployment, gender movements, civil rights movement, and social unrest due to black liberation movement on the other. A man of modest and witty mind, he tries to counter this challenge by offering a moral theory of justice. The question he is trying to answer in his 'A Theory of Justice' is 'What is the most appropriate moral conception of justice for a democratic society?' Accordingly, Rawls tries to combine

liberal and socialist egalitarian views of justice in his unique ideas of justice: ‘justice as fairness’. It means, “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.” However, he clarifies that justice and fairness are not the same.

Rawls constructs two basic principles of justice as fairness: (a) the equality principles: ‘Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others.’ and (b) the difference principle: ‘Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged and attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.’ In other words, the equality principle is concerned with citizens’ equal rights to basic liberties such as the right to vote, freedom of conscience, etc. and the difference principle, on the other hand, deals with redistribution.

The first principle of justice (a) is ‘the principle of greatest equal liberty’. Rawls further argues that this first principle is logically prior to the principle (b); so principle (a) must be satisfied before principle (b) to attain justice. It entails that any breach of basic rights should not be validated by arguing that such a breach may produce economic and social advantages. The second principle of justice (b) has two parts: the principle of fair equality of opportunity and the difference principle. To attain justice, fair equality of opportunity must be satisfied before the difference principle. So that, it cannot be infringed in order to produce economic and social advantages.

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### 13.11 Characteristics of Rawlsian Justice

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- Justice as fairness means certain principles that would result in just distribution in society. It is just as the procedure of distribution follows just principles.
- To make it workable, principles of liberty and equality should be coordinated as a basis to determine distribution of primary goods such as rights, liberties, income, wealth, opportunities, offices, welfare, etc.
- In order to get just principles, he assumes a situation of ‘original position’, like the state of nature in contract theory, in which people decide the principle of distribution. The purpose of the scheme of the original position is to set up a fair procedure so that all agreed principles will be just. In such situation men should not take advantage of social and natural circumstances for their own interests.

- In the ‘original position’ because men are not aware of their intelligence, skill or strength, social status or class and the principle of good.
- Under these circumstances, everyone acts behind the veil of ignorance to choose principles of justice. It is presupposed that the parties concerned do not know their place in society, their class position or social status, the economic, political and cultural conditions of their society, their idea of good and their fortune in the distribution of natural resources and capabilities, their intelligence and strength. Rawls assumes that people being rational decision makers will make rational choices and devise principles to achieve just distribution in society.
- Each individual in this situation will choose two principles: a) equality in assigning basic rights and duties to all and b) all social and economic inequalities would be so arranged that it results in compensating benefits for everyone including the least advantaged.

At this stage, it would now be rational to ask what measure, deserts or merit, skills, talent or abilities, is the right basis to distribute rewards to all. Rawls thinks none else but needs should be the right criteria for equal distribution of primary goods and highest benefits to the least advantaged of the society. Skills and talents are, to a great extent, the product of ‘naturally and socially acquired advantages’ – either of natural endowment or fortunate family and social circumstances. Hence, in Rawls’ opinion, it is illogical to reward an individual who due to his or her advantageous social or class position becomes skilled or capable person.

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## 13.12 A Critique of Rawls

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Rawls’s theory has been subjected to following criticisms.

- i) To the critics, his theory of justice is hardly contractarian because the choice of two principles in the ‘original position’, and under the ‘veil of ignorance’, is not a function of any contract. He draws the ‘difference principles’ or the ‘maximin’ rule to explain the justice. However, in an original position a person is ignorant of his status and needs. So it is hardly possible for him to bargain for primary social goods like liberty and opportunity, etc. Further, his proposed concept of veil of ignorance tends to destroy the possibility of having a real contract argument that can provide a defense of his two principles.

- ii) Ronald Dworkin argues the Difference Principle fails to deliver justice, since its formulation in terms of primary goods fails to recognize that those who are very unlucky, such as the severely ill or disabled, may need considerably greater shares of primary goods than others in order to achieve a reasonable life. Dworkin also argued that just economic distributions should be more responsive than the Difference Principle to the consequences of people's choices.
- iii) Robert Nozick argues that Rawls' theory cannot protect the liberty of an individual which man needs to determine what he should do with what belongs to him. As a supporter of minimal state and free individuals, Nozick argues that the individuals are not made to serve collective interests against his personal interests. He believes that justice begins and ends with the ownership of property.
- iv) Radical thinkers like C.B. Macpherson opines that Rawls starts his concept of justice with the acknowledgement that class division in terms of income and wealth is inevitable. It would further result in reduction of individual liberty through creating inequality of power in society. To Macpherson, Rawls' postulation that distributive justice is possible even within a class based society is seriously flawed because the poor and downtrodden people hardly enjoy freedom or get justice in such society. Besides, Rawls theory of justice tends to be culture-centric and relevant only to liberal-democratic society. Rawls' predilection for market is clearly visible in the pages of his writings. He maintains, "The ideal scheme sketched makes considerable use of market arrangements. It is only in this way, I believe, that the problem of distribution can be handled as a case of pure procedural justice." Macpherson, therefore, calls him 'revisionist liberal'. Norman Daniel also retorts that Rawls, writes a book on 'a theory of liberal democratic justice'.
- v) The Marxist thinkers like Richard Miller and Milton Fisk criticize Rawls on many counts. The concept of 'original position' suggests that man does not have any social milieu. So, his likings or so to say predilection does not have any social root. Besides, Rawls, as a man of liberal capitalist tradition, believes in inevitability of inequalities and it would continue forever as it is unsolvable. Man's endeavor to create a social system devoid of inequalities finds no support in his writings. Yet he develops a model based on equality. Further, the base factor of his theory is individual rationality which is nothing but an offshoot of liberal ideology.
- vi) Rawls believes that the second principle of justice, that is, the principle of

greatest equal liberty, fair equality of opportunity and the difference principle, may be realized through a constitutional democracy. However, this argument has certain critical defects. It allows a greater inequality in the distribution of wealth and property. As a result, equality of economic, political and social opportunity for all cannot be ensured at all. Besides, constitutional democracy may encourage concentration of political power in a few hands that will use it for personal gains. However, Rawls prescribes constitutional guarantee of equal rights of participation in the political system to rectify this defect.

- vii) Amartya Sen observes that Rawls' theory of justice can be criticized from two major angles. Rawls is too much dependent on institutional arrangements, which is called transcendental institutionalism. It is nothing but speculative or hypothetical: his original position, for example, cannot include the plurality of human society. In other words, the concept of justice should be based on the realities of social life. Secondly, Rawls' idea of liberty is dichotomous: while liberty cannot be reduced to mere facility, excessive stress on liberty neglects the basic realities of human life, like hunger. Thirdly, perfect justice is overemphasized in Rawls theory. Sen thinks, that justice can be ensured only through rectification of injustice. Schopenhauer remarks "[A] theory of justice that can serve as the basis of practical reasoning," he writes, "must include ways of judging how to reduce injustice and advance justice, rather than aiming only at the characterization of perfectly just societies." This is the only way of treating equals equally.
- viii) Communitarians like Walzer, Sandel, McIntyre and others argue that Rawls ignores the basic values of community life. He religiously upholds the individual only and his liberty. Sandel rejects this lopsidedness and observes that 'shared self-understanding and affection' is the primal basis of just society. The identity of the individual and his/her pursuits in life and his/her political self are embedded in community values.

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### 13.13 Conclusion

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In spite of these criticisms one can not deny the positive aspects of Rawlsian theory. Justice is, an indispensable part of social life in general and human life in particular. Justice stands for rule of law, absence of arbitrariness and a system of equal rights, freedoms and opportunities for all in society. In other words, justice secures and protects rights of all in a fair way. It stands for harmony among all members of a society. Justice encourages bonding or joining or organizing people

together into a right or fair order of relationships. This fair order in society again demands the regulation of selfish actions of people for securing a fair distribution, equal treatment of equals, and proportionate and just rewards for all. It tries to reconcile the interests of society and individual interests. Raphael rightly opines, “Justice protects the rights of the individual as well as the order of society.” These varied meanings of justice and polemics it engenders further reflect the inherent plurality of the concept of justice. The dearth of one universally agreed definition of justice points to the fact that the idea of justice is conditioned by context. Justice is a way of understanding of the world around individual – its structure and the way to restructure it with reference to context. However, this plurality again shows the values and extent of a concept in a democratic society. Justice is embodied in equal citizenship rights for all persons, economic and social equality, it brings up questions of distributive justice, how resources and opportunities are divided among everyone in society. It denotes appropriateness or fairness or proper balance. Just behavior or treatment or the administration of law or authority helps in maintaining this proper balance. Justice holds the people together by normal ties and rights. Above all, justice is a primary condition of good governance.

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### 13.14 Summing Up

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- Concept of justice has been widely debated throughout the ages.
- Greek political thinkers view justice as an ethical exercise.
- Plato treats justice as both a principle of moral conduct and an ideal social order.
- Aristotle advocates corrective or equity based justice.
- Roman political thinkers on the other hand, emphasize on the law of nature as the basis of justice.
- Augustine opines that justice is the continual will to render to each his dues. Aquinas describes justice as an intrinsic principle of good action related to the will of proportional distribution and reciprocal transactions. With the advent of materialist approach in the study of politics and society.
- Utilitarians, like Hume, explain justice in terms of the greatest happiness of the greatest number.
- J.S. Mill views justice as an instrument for protecting and safeguarding human liberty. Justice has been also explained from the legalist perspective Hobbes,

Bentham and Austin support the legal concept of sovereignty. They argue for the supremacy of the law emanating from the sovereign power.

- By rejecting the legal approach to justice, Laski argues that too much emphasis on judicial elements excludes ethical and sociological consideration.
- Rawls, giving emphasis on just distribution of primary goods in society, promotes the theory of distributive justice. Some political philosophers offer an alternative conception of justice.
- The Marxist school, led by Marx and Engels, observes that justice cannot be separated from the overall analysis of class relations and class antagonism in a given society. So, the distributive principle should be the economic basis.
- The Communitarians from the pluralistic point of view argue that justice should be analysed from the communitarian context and the notion of good is created by the community to which all individuals belong.
- The notion of justice in the twenty-first century has become global and cosmopolitan.
- It has also been extended to ecological issues. However, justice is a dynamic concept. In different ages people have added different values to the idea of justice.

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## 13.15 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

- 1) Write a note on the nature of justice.
- 2) Explain Greek concept of justice
- 3) Prepare an essay on liberal views of justice
- 4) Discuss Marxist approach to justice.
- 5) Examine the alternative views (Communitarian, Cosmopolitan and Ecological) of justice.

### Short Type Questions :

- 1) Evaluate rawlsian theory of justice.
- 2) Discuss the ecological concept of justice

- 3) Analyse Plato's view on justice.
- 4) Examine two basic principles of Rawls's theory of justice.
- 5) Explain the evolving nature of justice as mentioned by Arnold Brecht.
- 6) Write a short note on original position.

**Objective Questions :**

- 1) How does Plato define justice?
- 2) Mention Aristotle's view on justice.
- 3) How does Ernest Barker define justice?
- 4) What did justice mean in the middle ages?
- 5) What is meant by global justice?

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**13.16 Further Reading**

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1. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Trans. W.D. Ross, 1999, Batoche Books, Kitchener.
2. Kant, I., 1965. *The Metaphysical Elements of Justice Part I of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Bobbs-Merrill.
3. Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1971.
4. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, Cambridge University Press, 1982.
5. Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, Basic Books, New York, 1983.
6. Defining Justice Margot A. Hurlbert and James P. Mulvale <https://fernwoodpublishing.ca/files/pursuingjustice.pdf>
7. Raphael, D.D. *Problems of political philosophy*, Macmillan, 1979.

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## **Unit 14 : Concept of Rights**

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### **Structure**

#### **14.1 Objective**

#### **14.2 Introduction**

#### **14.3 Meaning**

#### **14.4 Historical origin of rights**

#### **14.5 Theories of rights**

##### **14.5.1 Theory of Natural Rights**

##### **14.5.2 Utilitarianism**

##### **14.5.3 Idealist Theory of Rights**

##### **14.5.4 Theory of moral-legal rights**

##### **14.5.5 Theory of Historical Rights**

#### **14.6 Types of Rights**

#### **14.7 Conclusion**

#### **14.8 Summing Up**

#### **14.9 Probable Questions**

#### **14.10 Further Reading**

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### **14.1 Objective**

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- This unit aims to make learners students familiar with the basic concept of rights and its characteristic features.
- Limitations of the theories of rights.
- Different categories and sub-categories of rights.

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## 14.2 Introduction

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Rights are considered vital to any civilization as they are the established pillars of every culture, tradition and society. We have witnessed the world getting engaged in various kinds of social conflicts which are all rooted in the claiming of individual and collective rights. According to the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, “rights structure the form of governments, the content of laws and the shape of morality as it is currently perceived”.

Every lawful government and its constitution is obligated to serve its citizens and bestow them with different kinds of rights. Politics plays an important role in developing or recognizing the above rights. Political orientation or belief is an important determinant factor in understanding the concept of Rights. Rights about particular issues or particular groups, are often areas of special concern and they become critical when they come in conflict with each other.

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## 14.3 Meaning

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In an organized society, the common purpose of living well brings individuals under a collective umbrella. This purpose is fulfilled only by the favourable conditions for the development of the personality of the human being. It is impossible to be good citizen in a society in which there is usually no opportunity to transform one’s potentiality into reality. It is an indispensable prerequisite to have at least a few opportunities favourable to the realization of human personality. For example, it is not possible for a human being to develop his own personality without the freedom of expression. This recognition is essential to the wellbeing of the individual.

The idea of rights is not a static idea. It is a dynamic concept with. For example, at the beginning of the industrial expansion, free use of the property rights of the people was recognized. But with its inherent evil effect, the expansion of the capitalist industry created a situation in which it was no longer possible to protect this free right. Then, in the middle of the twentieth century, the right of property in all the countries was restricted. Due to such a constant flux of social life, it is not possible to compose a perpetual list of rights. It is possible to have rights only in those states where freedom and equality are present. Without freedom, it is not possible for people to protect their rights and interests. Only democratic system arising out of periodic elections and presence of alternative political parties can ensure human rights.

Thus rights are the sum total of these conditions which ensure development of individual personality. But rights in its proper sense are never rights unless they are recognised by the state.

Without equality, there will be discrimination. In that case the significance of the rights will be completely lost. Therefore, the level of entitlement is dependent on the nature of the political system. In a totalitarian state, where the distinction between the state and the administration is unclear and where there is hardly any political competition and bargaining, the right is left to the whims of the ruler. Such a state does not guarantee the real rights to its citizens. In a democratic state, the existence of alternative political parties, independent media, and democratic institutions such as the judiciary constitutional rights.

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## 14.4 Features of rights

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Some of the important **features of rights** that can be discussed are:

### **1) Rights are the means of personality development :**

The rights are all the conditions that a human being needs in order to enrich his personality. Rights are socially desirable conditions.

### **2) The concept of rights is socially dependent :**

Since people enjoy rights as social beings, they are obliged to observe fundamental rules of social life. In the process of enjoying rights individual must be aware of similar rights of others.

### **3) Rights are not always a state centric :**

Rights are an essential part of a person. What he will do for his survival depends entirely on himself.

### **4) Rights are a legal concept :**

The main task of the state is to create conditions necessary for so that the development of individual personality.

Bosanquet says a right is a claim recognized by society and enforced by the state.

How citizens enjoy their rights depends entirely on state and state laws.

### **5) Right are dynamic in nature:**

The concept of rights is not fixed. Society is dynamic new issues are emerging.

From this perspective rights have a tendency to grow. In the process of socio-economic development individuals raise new demands and these demands when recognised by the state become rights. Right to work, right to leisure, right to strike etc. are such rights.

6) Rights are not absolute. Rights are correlative with duties.

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## 14.5 Theories of rights

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There are compelling theories of rights offered by several theorists.

### 14.5.1 Theory of Natural Rights

Natural rights are natural claims as they come as gifts of nature and are not dependent on any authority. These rights were available to individuals in the state of nature. This theory is mainly linked with two thinkers Hobbes and Locke, who were supported by Spinoza, Jefferson and Blackstone. Later Rawls and Nozick employed this theory.

Though Hobbes started as an individualist where he was promoting individual rights, however, he ended up being absolutist in the sense that he advocated surrendering all these rights as a necessary condition for the establishment of government. It was Locke who strongly championed the natural rights by recognising individuals right to resistance if the authority fails to protect individual right to life, liberty property.

Two contemporary theorists Rawls and Nozick based their theory of rights on social contract and natural rights. For Rawls what is relevant for justice is the individual's means to pursue their own ends and to live whatever good life they choose for themselves. Nozick believes that individual rights especially property rights is derived from the principle of natural right of self ownership.

### 14.5.2 Utilitarianism

According to the utilitarians, a just action relative to all other possible actions, maximises utility or "the good". This is the utility principle. Utilitarianism is solely consequentialist; the justice or injustice of an action or state of affairs is determined exclusively by the consequences it brings about. If an action maximises utility, it is just. On this account, therefore, rights are purely instrumental. Utilitarian will honour a right if and only if it will lead to the maximisation of utility. This statement also indicates the limits of all rights. If the exercise of a particular will not maximise

utility, the utilitarian is obligated to violate that person's rights for the sake of utility.

### **14.5.3 Idealist Theory of Rights**

The idealistic theory defines a right as that 'which is really necessary to the maintenance of material conditions essential to the development and perfection of human personality. In simple words, it means 'that without rights no man can become the best that he is capable of becoming. Thus, it is the right and duty of every human being to develop his potentiality. Hence, a right is a claim based on the rational will of man, and, for this reason they are first recognized by the society and then translated into law by the state. Barker rightly says, "Human consciousness postulates liberty; liberty involves right; rights demand the state". Thus, the idealistic theory looks at rights from a highly moral point of view. Rights are rooted in the mind of man. They are powers granted to him by the community in order that he with others may realize a common good of which his good is an intrinsic part.

### **14.5.4 Theory of moral-legal rights**

Along with natural rights, moral recognition is equally important. This gets reflected in the ideas of Kant, Laski and Barker. This theory is concerned not only with the source but also the content of rights. Legal rights are concerned only with the recognition of states, whereas the moral rights are concerned with moral content.

#### **• Kantianism**

Kant's political philosophy is concerned with the reciprocal acknowledgment in one another's valid claims to freedom of choice and action. Kant's political morality is a morality of external legislation. Other's valid freedom claims restrict one's freedom of choice and action.

#### **• Laski's Theory of Rights:**

Laski describes rights as "those conditions of social life without which no man can seek, in general, to be himself at his best". Laski calls rights as conditions of social life. Right is a social concept and deeply linked with social life. The essentiality of rights is established by the fact that individuals claim them for the development of their best self. He places rights, individuals and state on the same board in the sense that they cannot be separated from each other and there is no antagonism between them. Laski recommends the long-cherished view that the state has a very important role to play in the realisation and, before that, recognition of human rights. Mere recognition, moreover, is not sufficient for the exercise of rights. The state must, through law and institutions, implement the rights.

The most significant part of Laski's theory is the functional aspect of rights. It emphasizes on the relation between right and duty. He stated that Rights are correlative to functions. The functional theory emphasizes that an individual is entitled to claim rights only when he performs duty otherwise the claim or demand for right cannot be entertained.

- **Barker's Theory of Right:**

Barker's view is theoretically similar to Laski. Though both are liberal philosophers, yet Barker has a clear bias to idealism. The main purpose of political organisation, called state, is to see that the personality of the individual gets ample scope for development. It is the duty of the state to guarantee and secure the conditions essential for that objective. These secured and guaranteed conditions are called rights. Individual's personality cannot develop automatically or under most adverse or antagonistic environment. Development of personality requires favourable conditions and these are to be guaranteed by the state through the enactment of law.

Barker also discusses the moral aspect of rights. He says, that law of the state helps individuals to secure rights. But rights are claims and the origin is the individual himself. The individual is a moral person and it is his determination that he will develop his moral personality through the rights. His purpose is not to inflict any harm upon the society.

### **14.5.5 Theory of Historical Rights**

Historical Rights are individual and collective rights based on traditions, customs, which are based on historical and evolutionary grounds. Thinkers like Burke, Maine and MacIver believe that laws have historical roots based on usages and customs. For example, Magna Carta, Bill of Rights etc have a historical ground and eventually became legal rights. According to this theory, it is history which is the basis of rights. Rights are crystallization of customs and usages which in course of time become rights.

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## **14.6 Types of Rights**

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Rights are considered fundamental to any civilization as they are the established pillars of every culture, tradition and society. We have witnessed the world getting engaged in various kinds of social conflicts which are all rooted in the claiming of individual and collective rights.

There are various kinds of rights, some are backed by law whereas others are morally established. Broadly speaking there are three kinds of rights — Natural,

Moral and Legal-which have been elaborately discussed in the following sections.

We shall now discuss the types of rights in detail.

### **14.6.1 Natural Rights**

Natural rights are those that goes beyond the boundaries of beliefs, laws, customs, and not related to any particular culture, tradition or government. Consequently, they are universal and inalienable and are closely related to the concept of natural laws.

Many thinkers have faith in natural rights. They stated that people have inherent rights Natural rights are parts of human nature and reason. Supporters of this view maintain that an individual enters into society with certain basic rights and that no government can deny these rights.

Critics argue that the concept of natural rights is unreal. Rights are the products of social living. These rights can be enjoyed only in a society. Rights have behind them the recognition of society as common claims for development, and that is why the state protects these rights.

### **14.6.2 Moral Rights**

The basis of moral rights is individual's ethical consciousness and conscience. They are claims based on the moral code of the society. However, the state does not guarantee the enjoyment of these moral rights. Moral rights include parents claim to be looked after during old age by their sons and daughters.

### **14.6.3 Legal Rights**

The rights that a citizen enjoys are privileges recognized and authorized by the state. Each state makes laws to remedy any violation of legal rights. For example, in a state every citizen has a legitimate right to freedom of speech expression.. If a citizen interferes with the privilege of another citizen, the state will take necessary steps to enforce the rights. Legal rights can be divided into Civil and Political rights:

**14.6.4 Civil Rights :** Civil rights are those rights which ensure, a decent civil life for the individual. These rights are essential to a civilized life. All these rights ensure mental and spiritual development of the people. In most states these rights are embodied in a constitutional document, and in almost all modern states there is a detailed mechanism to protect citizens from the possibility of violation of civil rights by individuals or administrations. Freedom of speech and expression, freedom of association, right to property, right to contract are some important civil rights. Civil rights are indispensable condition for the development of the individual self. These

rights are universal possession of the citizen. Modern states guarantee these rights to all without any discrimination on the ground of caste, class, creed, religion or sex.

### **A Right to Life :**

This right is the most basic claim in the sense that it is the basis of other rights. It is not possible to enjoy rights without life. The right to life is intimately linked to the right to protection from any attack inside or external aggression. Every civilized state has a very comprehensive system to protect each of its members. The right to use force to defend one self against an attack also falls within this right.

### **B Right to Freedom :**

This right entitles every citizen to exercise his or her basic mental or physical ability without interruption or hindrance. This right includes freedom of speech and expression, assembly, association or union, movement, residence, to practice any occupation and freedom from arbitrary arrest.

### **C Right to Education :**

At present, a comprehensive and universal education plan is needed to understand the modern political institutions that are built upon complex industrial civilization. Without this understanding, it is not possible for an individual to play his role as a citizen. The right to education has been recognised as a fundamental right in every modern state. A right to free and compulsory primary education for all and an obligation to develop equitable access to secondary and higher education is necessary to create a free and open society.

### **D Property Rights :**

This right refers to the free enjoyment of property and its use. This right also includes the right to gift property to someone or to donate it by will.

### **E Right to Contract :**

According to this right, every citizen has the right to enter into an independent agreement with anyone else. This right is the basis of modern independent society. Under state laws both sides are bound by the terms of the contract.

### **F Right to Religion :**

At present, in secular states, the right of every citizen to practice any rituals and ceremonies of his choice is a fundamental right of every citizen. The state maintains

neutrality on all matters of religion and leaves it to the wishes and preferences of the individual.

### **G Right to Freedom of Thought and Opinion :**

The right to think is the cornerstone of democracy. This fact has been proved by Socrates through his work and life experience. According to Professor Barry, this right is an essential prerequisite for mental and moral progress. This right is an indicator of the freedom of expression that once again sets the standard for freedom of speech and the media. Freedom of expression is essential for the development of human personality.

### **H Right to Freedom to Form Associations :**

Modern society seems like a net network of various associations. Groups or associations are the focal point of contemporary society. In the present social situation, it is not possible for an isolated individual to protect himself from attacks of various types of socio-political situations. With a handful of strongly organized groups, he can procure the collective power necessary to ensure his own security and clearly declare his personal views and needs.

#### **1. I Right to Equality :**

All citizens are equal in the eyes of the law. This right prevents the state from discriminating between citizens on the basis of race, faith, caste, wealth or gender.

### **J. Economic Rights :**

The nineteenth-century eminent socialist thinker Louis Blanc is perhaps the first person to claim constitutional recognition for the right to work. Since then the movement for recognition of this right continued to gain momentum in every state. But even after passing of so many years, this right has not been recognised in most states.

**K. Political Rights :** All rights which guarantee citizens' participation in the exercise of the sovereign power of the state, are regarded as political rights. The right to vote and the right to form political associations are two important political rights. The people choose the government through the exercise of political rights. Political rights are the cornerstone of democratic governance.

Following are the basic political rights of citizen:

- Right to vote;

- The right to contest the election
- The right to public office and
- Right to form and join political associations

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## 14.7 Conclusion

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To summarize, rights are regarded as central to civilization, being observed as established pillars of society and culture. Natural rights are those that are not dependent on the laws or customs of any particular culture or government, and so are universal and inalienable. Natural rights cannot be repealed by human laws, though one can forfeit their enforcement through one's actions, such as by violating someone else's rights. On the other hand, legal rights are, clearly, rights that exist under the rules of legal systems or by virtue of decisions of suitably authoritative bodies within them. Moral rights allow for the protection of the relationship between oneself and the work one has created. They are claims based on the moral code of society.

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## 14.8 Summing Up

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- Rights are regarded as central to civilization, being observed as pillars of society and culture. They are products of social living. They are inseparably related with duties.
- Natural rights are those that are independent of the beliefs, laws, customs and not related to any particular culture, tradition or government. Inevitably, they are universal and inalienable.
- Moral rights depend on awareness and consciences of the individual.
- There are various kinds of rights like civil, political etc.

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## 14.9 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

- 1) Discuss the theory of natural Rights.
- 2) Examine the different kinds of Rights.

- 3) What are the different kinds of Civil Rights?
- 4) How are legal rights different from civil and political rights?

**Short Type Questions :**

- 1) Explain the basic features of Rights.
- 2) Indicate the difference between positive and negative rights.
- 3) Examine the importance of political rights.
- 4) Write a short note on Barker's understanding of Rights.

**Objective Questions :**

- 1) What are legal rights?
- 2) What is meant by civil rights.
- 3) What is meant by moral rights?

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**14.10 Further Reading**

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- Ray, Amal, Bhattacharya, Mohit, Political Theory — Ideas and Institutions, World Press, 1998
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## **Unit 15 : Concept of Human Rights**

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### **Structure**

- 15.1 Objective**
- 15.2 Introduction**
- 15.3 Meaning of Human Rights**
- 15.4 Features of Human Rights**
- 15.5 Evolution of Human Rights**
- 15.6 Theories of Human Rights**
- 15.7 Three Generations of Rights**
- 15.8 Globalization and Human Rights**
- 15.9 Terrorism and Human Rights**
- 15.10 Human Rights of Women and Children**
- 15.11 Conclusion**
- 15.12 Summing Up**
- 15.13 Probable Questions**
- 15.14 Further Reading**

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### **15.1 Objective**

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After going through this unit learners will be able to understand—

- The meaning and basic features of human rights.
- The history of the evolution of this concept.
- Various theories of human rights.
- The impact of globalisation and terrorism on human rights.
- Broadening of the idea of rights in terms of three generations.

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## 15.2 Introduction

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It was once the case that rights were always associated with domestic legal and political systems. In the last half century a complex network of international law and practice has grown up around the idea that the individual possesses rights by virtue of being human. The philosophy of human rights addresses questions about the existence, content, nature and justification of human rights.

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## 15.3 Meaning of Human Rights

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Human rights refer to inherent, universal rights of human beings regardless of jurisdiction, ethnicity, nationality or sex. These are rights to which people are entitled by virtue of being human. The idea of human rights originated from the philosophical idea of natural rights. Human rights are universal in the sense that they belong to all humans. They are fundamental in the sense that they are inalienable.

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## 15.4 Features of Human Rights

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1. Human Rights are Inalienable: Human rights are inherent rights of the individuals irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, sex and nationality.
2. Human Rights are essential and necessary: Human rights are needed to ensure the moral, physical, social and spiritual welfare of an individual. Human rights are also essential as they provide suitable conditions for material and moral upliftment of the people.
3. Human Rights are associated with human dignity.
4. Human Rights are irrevocable: Human rights are irrevocable as they cannot be taken away by any power or authority because these rights originate with the social nature of man in the society. They belong to a person simply because he is a human being. As such human rights are moral rights.
5. Human Rights are essential for the fulfilment of purpose of life: The phrase “human right” is applied to those conditions which are essential for the fulfilment of this purpose.
6. Human Rights are Universal: Human rights are not the sole possession of any privileged class of people. Human rights are universal in nature, without

exception. The values such as divinity, dignity and equality form the basis of these rights.

7. Human Rights are never absolute: Man is a social animal and he lives in a civic society, which always put certain limitations on the enjoyment of his rights and freedoms. Human rights as such are those limited powers or claims, which are contributory to the common good and which are recognized and guaranteed by the State, through its laws. As such each right has certain limitations.
8. Human Rights are Dynamic: Human rights are not stationary, they are dynamic. Human rights go on expanding with socio-economic, cultural and political developments.
9. Human Rights limits state power: Human rights imply that every individual has legitimate claims upon his or her society. So human rights limit the state's power. These may be in the form of negative restrictions on the powers of the State, preventing it from violating the inalienable freedoms of the individuals, or in the nature of demands on the State.

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## **15.5 History of the development of the concept of Human Rights**

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The origin of thinking about human rights can be traced to two features of medieval political and intellectual life: the doctrine of natural law and the political practice of extracting charter of liberties. Natural law generates universal rights and duties, while a charter confers local and particular liberties.

Magna Carta came into effect in 1215 to protect human rights in England. Magna Carta still forms an important symbols of liberty today, often cited by politician and campaigners and is still held in great respect by the British and American legal communities.

France's autocratic monarchy collapsed during the French Revolution of 1789. The new French bourgeoisie wanted to constitute a representative legislature by drafting a constitution. In the Constituent Assembly a document was accepted which is known as Declaration of the Right of Man and Citizen.

The 1789 Declaration, together with the 1215 Magna Carta, the 1689 English Bill of Rights, the 1776 US Declaration of Independence and the 1789 US Bill of Rights, inspired in large part the 1945 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The 1789

declaration stated that rights are ‘natural, inalienable and sacred’. The declaration mentioned the principle of popular sovereignty. It stated that all the citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law have equal access to all public dignities, places and employment according to their capacity and without distinction, other than that of their virtues and of their talents.

Philosophers such as Locke, Rousseau, Thomas Paine, John Stnart Mill expanded on the theme of universality of rights during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

Mary Wollstonecraft in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* contributed a in the achievement of women’s rights.

The US Declaration of Independence of 1776 states that all men have the right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. On the basis of this declaration American Bill of Rights was written. Following the American and French example of upholding human rights, other countries started adopting them in their respective countries namely Netherlands (1798), Sweden (1809), Spain (1812), Norway (1814), Belgium (1831), Siberia (1842) etc.

The development and spread of socialism in the nineteenth century made the human rights concept more pervasive.

In 1816-17, students from different universities in Germany were demanding freedom of expression and other freedoms. During that time, European women did not have voting rights. There was widespread discrimination between women and men. No European state recognized the right to form a trade union until the beginning of this century. Thus with the rise of human rights movement workers in Britain and France started demanding the right to form trade unions. In 1834, the London Working Association was formed and acquired the right to unite. In 1838, the working class of England submitted a proposal demanding some benefits for them. This is known as the Chartist movement.

During the early twentieth century, International Labour Organization became prominent to protect workers form discrimination and adopted policies to protect and promote the rights of workers.

It was only after the Declaration Of International Human Rights that the human rights and civil rights movement gained popularity in various parts of the world. When the United States carried out the genocide in Vietnam in 1950s and 1960s, Amnesty International sent investigators to Vietnam to investigate. In addition to this organization, other Human Rights Organizations, such Asia Watch, Human Rights Watch are playing important role in protecting human rights.

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## 15.6 Theories of Human Rights

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Following are some of the theories of human rights.

- **Liberal theory of rights** : Locke's advocacy of rights to life, liberty and property of individuals form the basis of the first generation rights for the citizens.
- **Welfare theory of positive rights** proposes rights which are social and economic in nature, which are concerned with the welfare of the people. They belong to the second generation rights.
- **Cultural Relativist theory of rights and Multicultural theory of rights** recognises the cultural specificity of the different societies and groups and offer their protection. Eg: advocacy of Asian values against western values.
- **Communitarian theory of rights** : Theorists like Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor, Walzer have argued that each individual develops an identity as a member of the community. Communitarians refuse to recognise independent rights of the individual.
- **Feminist theory of rights** : Feminists by criticising the mainstream human rights discourse, argue that the women's rights *par se* has been ignored and not recognised in the human discourse doctrine. The discourse reflects male domination and there are not enough spaces for women's issues.
- **Marxian theory of rights** : It is a known fact that Marx neither formulated a theory of state nor of rights. He believed that natural theory of rights is based on private property ownership which invariably are the rights of the bourgeoisie. Marxists believe that in a class divided society one class exploits the other through the instrument of state. As such rights belong only to one class — the dominant class.

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## 15.7 Three Generations of Rights

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Human rights have emerged over the years. For the purpose of study their development has been divided into three generations. For a long time, the notion of different "generations" of human rights has established itself in human rights literature and teaching.

The division of human rights into three generations was initially proposed in 1979 by the Czech jurist Karel Vasak at the International Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg. His theories have primarily been rooted in European law.

Vasak's divisions follow the three watchwords of the French Revolution — Liberty, equality and fraternity. The three generations are also reflected in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which includes rights that are thought of as second generation as well as first generation ones, but it does not make the distinction in itself.

It's been over four decades since Karel Vasak introduced the three generations of rights. Although subject to severe criticism since the outset, his division of rights into generations has offered scholars, activists, and pundits a useful tool to organize the human rights discourse. Even critics of the concept itself, like Philip Alston, Jack Donnelly, or Hurst Hannum cannot deny its existence. There are questions regarding the validity of Vasak's categorisation specially in the context of the end of the Cold War, the new challenges of democratization, new pressing problems like terrorism and migration etc.

The first generation has a long history, dating back to the Magna Carta of 1297, United States Bill of Rights of 1791 and the Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789. This category includes following rights — the right to life, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, right to fair trial, equality before the law, and other civil and political rights.

The second generation rights was a product of the rapid industrialization and accompanying social and economic inequalities. In the wake of the emerging ideological confrontation after World War-II, the communist camp staunchly supported the economic, social, and cultural rights. These rights demand active state intervention. Hence, the first two generations of rights were included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN General Assembly 1948). While differentiating between the first and second generations of rights, Vasak contrasted the negative character of the former and the positive character of the latter. The third generation of human rights is the most recent and vague in content. Collective rights that belong to this group were mentioned in the Stockholm Declaration (UN General Assembly 1972), Rio Declaration (UN General Assembly 1992), and other international documents of declaratory character.

Three generations of human rights are discussed below:

### **15.7.1 First Generation of Human Rights :**

The Constitution of every state recognizes the rights that every person within the society enjoys in his or her fair, normal and disciplined way of living. Those rights are:

#### **Civil Rights**

The rights that people enjoy in civil and social life and for the full development of the personalities are called municipal rights. Municipal rights are an essential part of the democratic system. Among these rights are the right to life, the right to freedom, the right to security, the right to communication, the right to property, freedom of thought and expression, the right to be freed against slavery and exploitation, the right to freely worship and preach, the right to travel freely the right against, unlawfull arrest and detention.

#### **Political Rights**

Political rights provide opportunities for direct or indirect participation in state affairs. Particularly important among the political rights are the right to vote, the right to be elected, the right to express his political views freely, the right to have a fair trial in an independent and impartial court, the right to peacefully assemble and build an organization.

First-generation human rights, sometimes called “blue” rights, deal essentially with liberty and participation in political life. They are fundamentally civil and political rights in nature: They serve negatively to protect the individual from excesses of the state intervention. First-generation rights include, among other things, the right to life, equality before the law, freedom of speech, religion, property rights, voting rights etc. Some of these rights date back to the Magna Carta of 1215 and the Rights of Englishmen, which were included in the English Bill of Rights in 1689. A more full set of first-generation human rights were declared in France by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in 1789, and by the US Bill of Right in 1791. They were given recognition in international law first by Articles 3 to 21 of the 1948 UDHR and later in the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

### **15.7.2 Second Generation of Human Rights :**

The second generation of human rights include economic rights, social rights and cultural rights. These rights are as follows:

## **Economic Rights**

The economic privileges of living in a democratic way through which people's lives are made happy, comfortable and secure are considered as economic rights. These economic rights include the right to work, the right to choose a workplace voluntarily, the right to a free and fair environment for work, the right to equal and fair remuneration for work, the right to organize workers union freely and to voluntarily participate in such unions, adequate food and clothing, the right to housing and the right to a decent living standard.

## **Social Rights**

The conditions that give opportunity to citizens to participate as members of society and establish their own identity are considered as social rights. These rights include the right to education, the right to health, the right to be married, the right to form a family, the right to social protection and assistance in the case of unemployment, legality, old age, illness etc.

Second-generation human rights are related to equality and began to be recognized by governments after World War II. They are fundamentally economic, social and cultural in nature. They guarantee different members of the citizenry equal conditions and treatment. Secondary rights would include rights to food, housing and health care, as well as social security and employment benefits. Like first-generation rights, they were also covered by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and further embodied in Articles 22 to 28 of the Universal Declaration, and the International Covenant.

In the United States of America, President Roosevelt proposed a Second Bill of Rights, covering much the same grounds, during his State of the Union Address on January 11, 1944. Today, many nations, states, or groups of nations have developed legally binding declarations guaranteeing comprehensive sets of human rights.

Some states have enacted some of these economic rights, e.g. the state of New York has enshrined the right to free education. These rights are sometimes referred to as “red” rights. They impose upon the government the duty to respect and promote and fulfil them, but this depends on the availability of resources. The duty is imposed on the state because it controls its own resources. The duty of government is to implement these positive rights.

### **15.7.3 Third Generation of Human Rights**

The next significant evolution occurred with the advent of the “third generation” of human rights. These rights are nothing but group or collective rights, of society or peoples’ rights, which were articulated in the second half of the 20th century. The third generation of human rights include: (i) economic development; (ii) self-determination; (iii) prosperity and peace; (iv) benefit from economic growth; (v) social harmony; (v) a healthy environment and health; (vi) participation in cultural heritage; (vii) natural resources; (viii) inter-generational equity. The third generation of human rights are necessary for creating the appropriate conditions in society to provide first and second generation human rights.

#### **Right to Development**

The third-generation human rights are primarily related to the right to development, as a whole. The right to development was included in the UN General Assembly Resolution in 1986. Development rights are an integral part of human rights. Development here refers to the personal, political, social, economic and cultural development of the individual. The various components of development like the right to self-determination, the right to equality, regardless of gender, caste, creed, religion etc. contribute to the development and enjoyment of individual personality.

Categorizations of these three generations of human rights should not be merely an academic distinction but should be fused together by all countries of the world. These rights were rooted in postcolonial discourses. Unlike the first and second generation, these newer rights cannot be understood as a reaction to colonialism. The hallmark of third generation rights, in contrast with first generation civil and political rights and second generation social, economic, and cultural rights, is that they involve global problems that no state or region of the world can solve alone. For this reason, third generation rights are often referred to as rights of “fraternity” or “solidarity.”

Article 22 of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights, signed in 1993, states that development rights are as important as other human rights. The first Vienna Conference was considered as an integral source of development of human rights. The primary responsibility of the states is to protect and promote the primary human rights of the community (eg food, education and health) and to maintain a decent standard of living. Thus, it can be said that development and human rights are intimately related to each other.

Third-generation human rights are those rights that go beyond the mere civil and

social, as expressed in many progressive documents of international law, including the 1972 Stockholm Declaration, the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development etc. Also known as **Solidarity human rights**, they are rights that try to go beyond the framework of individual rights to focus on collective concepts, such as community or people.

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## 15.8 Globalization and Human Rights

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Globalization has adversely affected the human rights situation in different parts of the world. IMFS structural adjustment policies led to hunger and riots in many countries. Even when the developing countries managed to eke out some growth, the benefits went disproportionately to the rich while the poor at the bottom facing even greater poverty. Globalization is not working for many of the world's poor. For millions of people globalization has not worked. Many have seen their jobs destroyed and their lives become more insecure.

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## 15.9 Terrorism and Human Rights

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Terrorism is characterized, first and foremost, by the use of violence. Such violence includes hostage taking, hijacking, bombing and other indiscriminate attacks, usually targeting civilians. Such activities have endangered human rights everywhere on the other hand. Most of the countries that are prime targets of terrorism have introduced restrictions on the civil rights of their citizen in the name of homeland security.

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## 15.10 Human Rights of Women and Children

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Human rights for women and children were first recognized at the International Human Rights Conference held in Vienna in 1993, The conference highlighted issues of violation of human rights within and outside the private domain. Subsequently, at the 5th International Women's Conference held in Beijing in 1996 it was decided that opportunities are needed to protect the future progress and empowerment of women, protection of the environment, protection of peace and harmony, the right to health and education.

Human rights are women's rights," declared the then U.S. first lady Hillary Clinton

at the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, which set an agenda for women's empowerment and identified 12 critical areas of concern, where urgent action was needed to ensure greater equality and opportunities for women and children. It also laid out concrete proposals for countries to bring about sustainable and irreversible change. She added that "Women must enjoy the right to participate fully in the social and political lives of their countries if we want freedom and democracy to thrive and endure."

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, confirms that the protection of human rights, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women is the first responsibility of governments. This focus was also endorsed through the adoption of CEDAW (1979), the U.N. Security Council resolution on "Women, Peace & Security" passed in 2000, and most recently with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, which includes a standalone goal of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

However, despite many conventions organized at the international and national level, the human rights of women have not been secured even today. Socio-economic discrimination against women exists everywhere.

In the Indian constitution, women and men have been given equal rights. The state has declared various schemes and made laws for the development and protection of women.

Gender discrimination is a major form of social inequality. Girl child is often considered as a burden on the family. This is because there is insufficient occupation for her, and dowry has to be given for her wedding. Foetal killing has been a crucial problem. A medical diagnostic process, called, amniocentesis, is misused by parents to select the sex of their child. This has resulted in the abortion of female fetuses. The misuse of this test has now resulted in banning of this test in India.

Despite the enactment of laws, abortion of female fetuses both in urban and rural areas continues.

There is a general disregard for the physical health and mental health of girls. The reason for this is gender discrimination. When the child is denied of proper nutrition and health care, the infant daughter grows up through neglect and apathy. As a result of this malnutrition, a huge number of mothers take high risk of life.

At present, rape, trafficking of women and doing business with the women are increasing steadily in society and various laws have been enacted to stop these incidents. But this did not yield much result.

In this male dominated society, women have entered the workplace to establish themselves. But in the workplace, women often become victim of sexual harassment.

To eradicate socio-economic discrimination strong administrative measures need to be taken special emphasis mould be laid on economic empowerment of the women.

The struggle to establish women's human rights is not an isolated struggle. This is not a struggle against men. It is the struggle against the socio-economic circumstances that allows the exploitation of vulnerable section of the society. Unless social discrimination is brought to an end, economic discrimination against women will continue. Only through the collective struggle of women and men can all human rights be ensured.

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## 15.11 Conclusion

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Over the last seven decades the growth of an international human rights regime based on the idea that human rights should be internationally protected has been striking. However, the record of compliance with human rights law is patchy. Moreover there are serious conceptual problems involved in widening the notion of rights to incorporate economic and collective rights. However, recent developments such as the International Criminal Court and the war on terror have reaffirmed the centrality of human rights for the present day world.

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## 15.12 Summing up

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- Thus Human rights are moral principles or norms that describe certain standards of human behaviour and are regularly protected by municipal and international law.
- They are commonly understood as inalienable fundamental rights and which are 'inherent in all human beings', regardless of their age, ethnic origin, location, language, religion, ethnicity, or any other status.
- They are applicable everywhere and at every time in the sense of being universal and they are equal in the sense of being the same for everyone.
- Many of the basic ideas that animated the human rights movement developed in the aftermath of the World War II, culminating in the adoption of the UDHR in Paris by the UN general Assembly in 1948.
- The true forerunner of human rights discourse was the concept of natural

rights which appeared as part of the medieval tradition.

- The modern human rights arguments emerged in the latter half of the 20th century, possibly as a reaction to slavery, torture, genocide and war crimes.

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### 15.13 Probable Questions

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#### Essay Type Questions :

- 1) What are the different theories of Human Rights?
- 2) Examine critically the history of the evolution of the idea of Human Rights.
- 3) Examine the impact of globalization and terrorism on human rights.

#### Short Questions :

- 1) Write a note on three generations of rights.
- 2) What are the basic features of Human Rights?
- 3) Why are women's issues an integral part of the Human Rights concept?

#### Objective Questions :

- 1) In what sense human rights are universal?
- 2) What does development rights refer to?

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### 15.14 Further Reading

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## NOTE

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