NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

STUDY MATERIAL

PG : POL. SC.

PAPER III (Eng)

MODULES 1, 2, 3 & 4

POST GRADUATE
POLITICAL SCIENCE

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

Professor (Dr.) Subha Sankar Sarkar
Vice-Chancellor

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NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

Post-Graudate Political Science (PGPS)

New Syllabus (w.e.f. July, 2015)

PAPER-III : ISSUES IN POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Post Graduate
P.G. Pol.Sc.-3

Module-1

Module-2

Module-3

Module-4

Unit 1 □ State and Civil Society

Structure

1.1 Objectives

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

(a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with an ovrview of the relation between state and civil society.

(b) The intellectual origins of civil society.

(c) The liberal viewpoint concerning the relation between state and civil soiety in the West.

(d) The Marxist viewpoint concerning the relation between state and civil society in the West.

(e) New perspectives on state and civil society.

1.2 Introduction

Since seventeenth century the term 'civil society' has emerged as one of the key concepts of modern western social and political thought. In political theory and political sociology it has been a crucial concept used in close association with the state which has occupied the centre-stage in western political thought. The term has been used by both liberal and marxist thinkers although it has suffered relative neglect in the marxist tradition. In the west itself, however, there is no single tradition of thought on civil society. Today the term has made a dramatic return, following, first, the fall of the Soviet model of socialism in the erstwhile Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, a process that started since the late 1980s and, second, in the wake of globalization. Civil society is today one of the conditionalities of the donors when giving aid to the third world countries. Most common examples of civil society, as far as globalization is concerned, are various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) involved in development projects. It is a term also being used by various radical groups for assertion of democratic rights against authoritarian regimes as well as for protection

of rights of the weaker and marginalized sections of society even in liberal democracies. The term 'civil society' is thus used today all over the world, in diverse settings, culture and contexts with varied, often contradictory, meanings. But what is common is that the relevance and importance of the term is undeniable in contemporary political thought.

The concept has been used in the west in the wake of modernity for a free, autonomous space for the individual against an all-powerful and encroaching state. While this original meaning has been retained somewhat, in the post-colonial and post-communist societies the term has come to acquire different meanings. In the former socialist countries, for example, the space for civil society, to begin with, did not exist due to the prevalence of the party-state and the over-extension of statism. As a result, the disintegration of the socialist systems in the early 1990s, following the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and break up of the Soviet Union in 1991, signalled also the rise of various civil society fora and platforms. The 'Solidarity' movement in Poland is a notable example. In the post-colonial societies, however, the term has meant different things to different people. Various political movements, including the socialist and the left, new social movements etc. all take into account the issue of civil society. It is a term that has been largely associated with democracy, its creation, maintenance, and celebration. The term has also been used for describing a certain social structure, or a set of social relations, which suggests a certain kind of relations between the state and the individual relating to an autonomous sphere of activity.

1.3 Civil Society : Intellectual Origins

The term 'civil society' is derived from the Latin *societas civitas,* to be exact, from Roman thinker, Cicero's definition of the state *(civitas)* as a partnership in law *(societas)* with equality of legal status, but not of money or talent among members. Before that Aristotle used the term *koinonia politike,* which suggested a community of free, equal and virtuous citizens, reflecting the classical Greek view of life. Gradually, it became a generic term of discourse for a secular and political order, as distinct from the religious one.

The term came to be used in Europe's towns from twelfth century as a nexus of relatively free individuals and groups without reference to the state. It was recorded in people's languages, preferences and behaviour, consciousness and academic writings too. The issues centring around which the term was used were personal security, freedom, security of property, land, house, goods from arbitrary seizure and unlawful violations of the same. Two instruments which proved decisive in the initial development of civil society were: law and legal procedure, and justice. The Roman legal system thus played a very important role in the development of civil society. Law was Christian society's instrument for protecting the weak against the strong, and securing the personal rights of the poor and defenceless. The following brief account indicates the spheres to which the Roman law applied: security of one's own house, family life, personal possession, trade and commerce, ownership, and its transferability, and so on. The Roman law regulated 'relatively free floating relationships in

which people were involved in buying, selling, contracting, marrying and entering partnerships'.

Johannes Althusius in the seventeenth century, under the influence of Aristotle, Cicero and Christian thought, attempted to articulate what was emerging then in the shape of what might be called civil society: the idea of a society based on exchange and reciprocity. In his words: "For if one person did not require another's aid, what society, reverence, order, reason, humanity would there be? This was why villages and cities were built, academies founded, and what many farmers, craftsmen...were joined together through their diversity in civil unity and society as so many members of the same body." This focus on an autonomous sphere of activity, free from the control of the state, to a large extent, however, strengthened the authority of the church too in its constant rivalry with the state.

The Renaissance and the Germanic discourses later added to the intellectual development of the essence of civil society. Personal freedom, rule of law and equality of persons, regardless of status, constituted its core. Machiavelli upheld social equality as the key to a truly free polity, and Luther extended the principle when he applied it to all callings.

One must also note, however, that there was tension between civic values (e.g. equality), and feudalism that upheld hierarchy and patronage. This is significant because the end of feudalism and the growth of capitalism were factors for the full development of civil society. The final aspect to consider in tracing the intellectual roots of civil society is the issue of government. Government was taken to be an integral part of civil ideology. Civil ideology prescribed the characteristic of proper civil government. The European city-states were seen as embodiments of civic values. The city was defined as the "liberty of citizens, or the immunity of inhabitants. City means you dwell safe from violence."

The major conclusion which follows from the above discussion is that the values embedded in the notion of civil society are Greco-Roman combined with the Germanic and the Judeo-Christian influences. These are marked by a religion-culture divide, the pluralism of attitudes, and a belief (sanctified by law) in the freedom of association.

1.4 State and Civil Society in the West: Liberal viewpoint

Even in the western liberal tradition there is no single tradition of thought on civil society. Four distinct traditions of thought developed in the west on the notion of civil society: English, Scottish, French and German.

(a) English tradition : The most celebrated English theorist of civil society was the seventeenth century thinker John Locke. *Two Treatises of Government,* and *An essay Concerning Human Understanding,* both published in 1689, after the Glorious Revolution in England (1688), are the major works in which can be found his ideas on civil society and the state. In simple terms, for Locke civil society was civil government, as distinguished from the state of nature. The state of nature, for Locke, is a terrain of freedom and equality amongst the members of a single species. As John Ehrenberg has shown, civil society, for Locke, was necessary primarily to protect the interests of the economic person, and economic

forces could organize civil society only in conditions of freedom, structured by the rule of law and protected by the state with limited coercive power. A limited state and the rule of law would make it possible for the rights-bearing individuals to pursue their economic interests, that is, to create, accumulate and use wealth in an ordered state of affairs. Civil society, for Locke, was thus the sphere of economic interests, the functioning of which would be autonomous, involving the unhindered pursuit of the natural rights to life, liberty and property, while restricting the authority of the state to the role of the protector of these rights.

(b) Scottish tradition : Locke's understanding of civil society as an autonomous realm of socio-economic activities branched out in two directions, which was manifest in the Scottish version. One position was represented by Adam Smith who in his work *Wealth of Nations* (1776) extended further the idea of Locke in order to espouse the cause of social integration. He argued that in a market-guided society with a proper division of labour self-interested economic activity would ensure social harmony and increased social wealth, as if guided by an 'invisible hand'. The other position, represented by Adam Ferguson in his *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), put forward a different understanding of civil society. While Smith's focus was on the self-regulatory forces of society, Ferguson emphasized the importance of the ethical-cultural realm in shaping the fate of a political community. He pointed out that a proper civil society would flourish only when pursuit of economic and commercial interests would be supplanted by cultivation of individual virtue and public spirit, since this alone would ensure the preservation and development of liberty.

(c) **French tradition** : Montesquieu and Tocqueville were the two leading theorists representing this tradition. Montesquieu in his *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748) viewed civil society as the sphere of mediation between political authority and the citizens. Civil society, for him, was constituted by a plurality of intermediate bodies, from estates to churches and lower political bodies against political absolutism. Tocqueville, writing almost a century later, in *Democracy in America* (1835/40), drew his inspiration from the functioning of American democracy and largely expanded the understanding of Montesquieu by arguing for a realm of communal self-organization and public debate, as manifest in the tradition of local self-government and socially autonomous associations whereby the citizens themselves take care of matters of common concern without relying on the authority of the state, and constituted the core of civil society.

(d) **German tradition** : Hegel was the most important representative of the German tradition and, unlike Locke, the Scottish and the French theorists, he was deeply sceptical of the idea of civil society, while highlighting its importance too. Hegel considered civil society primarily as the sphere of economic and commercial activities involving the idea of association and cooperation on one hand and 'atomization' on the other. While civil society, for him, was a sphere of public interest centring around groups, associations and corporations and thereby constituted an integrating force, it simultaneously 'atomized' the individual, as it made the individual conscious of sectional interests only, associating him with very narrow and limited concerns of social life. This drew the individual away from the larger

whole of the state making him selfish, parochial and apolitical. For Hegel, therefore, the narrow sphere of civil society needs to be superseded by the larger domain of the state.

1.5 State and Civil Society in the West: Marxist tradition

In the classical Marxist tradition the concept of civil society has been viewed with deep scepticism. Marx used the concept of civil society as a criterion of change from feudal to bourgeois society. Civil society, for him, was synonymous with the terrain of bourgeois self-interests, born in the site of crass materialism, an expression of modern property relations, of the struggle of each against all, of egotism. Marx's civil society was a Hobbesian nightmare of isolated and aggressive individuals bound together by cash nexus. According to Marx, civil society once composed of collective units such as estates, guilds etc. in the pre-capitalist era was dissolved by the bourgeoisie and transformed into a sphere composed of individuals, where they are engaged in socio-economic activities pertaining to the promotion of self-interests under capitalism. Marx hated civil society, because the spirit of civil society is the spirit of pure, selfish individualism. Civil society is the chief source of human alienation, 'an expression of the separation of man from his community, from himself and from other men'. The following passage of Marx expresses his negative view of civil society: '...the unsocial nature of civic life, of private property, trade, industry, and the mutual plundering of different civil groups...this debasement, this slavery of civil society is the natural foundation on which the modern state rests.' Civil society, for Marx, thus provides the necessary support to the modern capitalist state. Unlike the liberal thinkers who viewed civil society as a realm of freedom, pitted against the state, for Marx civil society is to be dissolved if human alienation under capitalism is to end. The dissolution of civil society, for Marx, was the key to human emancipation. Some later day commentators like Femia have pointed out that Marx's reduction of civil society to primarily an economic structure for the sustenance of bourgeois society prevented him from grasping the moral foundations of modern capitalism. He failed to understand that civil society was not simply a neutral space for market exchange. It was primarily an ethical realm of solidarity held together by the force of moral sentiments and natural affection.

This rather negative view of civil society, which was to a large extent close to the Hegelian standpoint, constituted the core of the marxist view of civil society for a long time until the publication of Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* after the end of World War II. Making a departure from Marx, Gramsci did not accept civil society to be synonymous with commercial and industrial society. Concurring with the general principle of marxism that power in class societies is exercised by the dominant over the subordinate classes by using force and violence, he nonetheless argued that the state under capitalism does not rule simply by using coercive measures. Capitalism rules, especially in societies marked by the long-standing presence of liberal democracy and advanced level of socio-economic development, by using force as well as consent, by securing the consent of the governed.

Linking this understanding to his central concept of hegemony, and seeking to answer the question as why there has not taken place a revolution (socialist) in the West after 1917, Gramsci drew our attention to the role of superstructure, which consisted of two levels. The first is civil society which consists of the "ensemble of organisms commonly called private". The second is the political society, or the state. These two levels correspond to the function of hegemony (which the dominant groups exercise throughout society) and it is in the context of this understanding that the concept of civil society is crucial in Gramsci's marxism.

The sphere of civil society (private) contains a set of institutions such as churches, parties, unions, universities, the press, and other voluntary associations. Such institutions of civil society perform the vital function of disseminating the ideology of the dominant classes over the subordinate classes, who unknowingly give consent to their own subordination. Civil society thus forms a major basis for the sustenance of the capitalist state in the West. According to Gramsci, armed revolution in Russia was facilitated by the fact that in these societies where liberal democracy and capitalism had not sufficiently thrived ' the state was everything', and therefore an insurrectionary method of capturing the state, which Gramsci called, following a military metaphor, 'a war of movement' or of 'manoeuvre', i.e. a frontal attack on the state, succeeded. But in the west where both the state and civil society were developed, and there was a proper balance between the two, the issue of revolution was complex because here the capture of civil society would be an additional, often difficult, task, of revolution before the capture of state power, or the winning of governmental power. Civil society, which is also termed, again using a military metaphor, 'fortresses and earthworks', or 'trench-systems', forms, according to Gramsci, capitalism's second line of defence against revolution. The alternative revolutionary strategy for socialism, at least, for the west, then must grapple with the complex issue of civil society. To be more precise, an act of revolution in the advanced societies of capitalism involves, first, the conquest of civil society by capturing its institutions on the cultural and ideological level, to be followed by the seizure of state power.

1.6 New Perspectives

Although civil society has been generally viewed as an autonomous domain vis-a-vis the state, with the onset of globalization and neoliberalism new questions are being raised, setting new perspectives for a more nuanced understanding of the concept of civil society. These may broadly be considered under the following heads.

(a) *Civil society apart from the state :* It denotes a sphere where individuals come together and form groups, pursue common enterprises and share interests, form voluntary associations and thereby is characterized by three features. First, membership of civil society organizations is essentially optional, participation in their activities being wholly a voluntary act. Second, it is pluralist in nature. While pursuing collective ends and public goods, in civil society individuals come together to realize particularist ends and specific goals, which

are diverse. Third, conceived in spatial terms, civil society focuses primarily on the task of drawing the boundary that distinguishes it from the state but does not set the agenda of the activities that should constitute the domain of civil society. This understanding, however, can be worked out in practice only in liberal-democratic regimes, since in authoritarian regimes associations, howsoever voluntary they are, would not be allowed to function if their activities are directed against the state.

(b) *Civil society against the state* : The fall of the Soviet Union and the East European regimes, following the breakdown of the Berlin Wall in 1989, strengthened the argument that civil society, indeed, has a crucial role to play in ensuring the fall of authoritarian regimes by generating protest movements against the state. In fact, a number of such civil society groups and associations concerned with human rights, freedom of speech and press contributed to the movement for democracy in this part of Europe. But, as pointed out by M.M. Howard, the legacy of organizational weakness and lack of people's trust in them characterize the state of civil society groups in post-Soviet Eastern Europe and Russia. Consequently, a question that has come up is : civil society movements, expressed in the form of street demonstrations and protests may not, however, necessarily produce political stability or good public policy.

(c) *Civil society in dialogue with the state :* Instead of viewing civil society as an antidote against the state scholars like Habermas view civil society in a dialogical relation with the state. Habermas considers public sphere as an extension of civil society that is, an arena where ideas, interests, values and ideologies formed within civil society are voiced and made politically effective in the sense that they are communicated to the state for appropriate implementation. Accordingly, in this understanding new social movements are identified as the most innovative actors in the public sphere, as they empower citizens, strengthen autonomy and expand democracy by giving citizens the necessary means of shaping the world. Civil society, in this perspective, acts as a critical dialogue partner with the state.

(d) *Civil society in support of the state :* In this understanding civil society is viewed both as a sphere of pluralism and a sphere that produces common lives, the focus being on a common bonding and promotion of civility and citizenship values. However, this perception of civil society has two associated problems. First: how to resolve the tension between the idea that civil society is a sphere of freedom (which is anti-statist) and civil society as a school of citizenship (which is somewhat statist in orientation). Second : there can be both good and bad civil societies. Thus, the idea of cultivation of civic values and values of citizenship can be self-defeating if by using this argument promotion of hate, bigotry, ethnic cleansing and communal violence is undertaken to buttress the moral foundation of the state. In other words, the argument underlying the idea of a good civil society can very well be used by the exponents of a bad civil society for an altogether different purpose.

(e) *Civil society in partnership with the state :* This is a new perspective, closely associated with neo-liberalism, the central argument being that as the state is overburdened with governmental activities, governance, which entails the act of efficient management, should be left to civil society organizations. Thus, civil society would emerge as a partner of the

state and would be associated with activities like devolution and outsourcing in the interest of governance. But here two problems are involved. First, there can be an overlap as well as blurring of boundaries between the act of governing and the act of governance. Second, if civil society acts as a partner, it challenges the traditional understanding that civil society acts as a check against the state.

(f) *Civil society beyond the state :* The exponents of this understanding view civil society in terms of transnational categories and look upon it globally, the reason being that the functioning of civil society has assumed global dimensions. Thus, a new coinage, "global civil society", has emerged in recent times. The two most important components of global civil society are issue-centred social movements and NGOs. First, issue-centred social movements clearly transcend national borders, which involve human rights, climate change, AIDS/HIV, migration and refugees. Activities involving these issues transcend national boundaries, as they involve players cutting across nations. Second, a large number of new social movements are now being channelized through NGOs, as it is being argued that these movements demand global engagement and it is through the NGOs, the transnational actors, that they are made operational. Critics, however, view the NGOs with scepticism, since they allege that many of the NGOs lack transparency and in the name of global engagement they plead for downsizing the state, posing thereby a challenge to the sovereignty of the state.

1.7 Sample questions

Long questions :

1. Attempt an overview of the liberal perspective on civil society in the West.
2. Examine the newly emergent perspectives on civil society in today's world.

Medium questions :

1. Identify the intellectual roots of the concept of civil society.
2. Analyse the place of civil society in the Marxist tradition.

Short questions :

1. Write a note on the French view of civil society.
2. Explain how Gramsci conceptualised the idea of civil society.
3. What is meant by "global civil society" ?

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Unit 2 ☐ Individualism

Structure

2.1 Objectives

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

(a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with an overview of individualism.
(b) Classicial individualism with reference to the views of J.S. Mill and Herbert Spencer.
(c) Modern individualism with reference to the views of Friedrich von Hayek and Isaiah Berlin.
(d) Critical assessment of individualism.

2.2 Introduction

Individualism, reflecting the spirit of liberalism, places the individual at the centre of political analysis. It gives emphasis on the privacy of the individual as distinguished from any group or social collectivity. Liberal and individualist ideas are opposed to statism. Thus, in its negative implications liberalism is a protest against all kinds of authoritarianism (especially political or state authoritarianism). In its positive meaning, however, liberalism encourages all kinds of social, political and economic activities that promote the interest of the individual. In its earlier phases individualism developed as 'negative liberalism' opposing all kinds of political interference and state intervention. Thus, as the political ideology of the physiocrats individualism opposed the mercantilist proposals to control industry and commerce. The laissez-faire slogan (of free trade) was raised against the mercantilist state. In course of time, however, with the growth of modern (early 20th century) individualism the positive meaning of liberalism gained prominence.

Individualism emphasises the supreme importance of the human individual. Human beings are seen, first and foremost, as individuals. There is an assumption that every individual has his/her own separate and unique identity. Accordingly, everyone should have the opportunity to develop one's potentiality and uniqueness in one's own way. This may be ensured either by complete non-interference by the state (thereby allowing operation of the principles of

free competition and 'survival of the fittest') or by making the state function as an agent that would provide equal opportunities to each and every individual to survive and thrive.

The 17th century English contractualists prepared the ground for individualism as they put stress on the individual in the making of the state. Even though Hobbes ultimately was advocating an absolutist state, he started with the premise that state emerged from the consent of the individuals who were otherwise in a state of war with each other. And John Locke, while advocating a kind of constitutional government, started with an emphasis on the natural right of every individual to his life, liberty and property. As G.S. Sabine observes, "The individual human being, with his interests, his enterprise, his desire for happiness and advancement, above all with his reason appeared to be the foundation on which a stable society must be built." C.R. Macpherson would characterize this early individualism as a kind of "possessive individualism". He called it 'possessive' because at this stage the individual would be regarded as the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them.

This initial focus of individualism, however, underwent a major modification with the rise of the welfarist state. The emergence of welfarism is explained by the crisis that classical liberalism experienced since the late 19th century, as rapid industrialization, following the advancement of capitalism, sharpened the problem of inequality, intensifying the social divide between the rich and the poor. This necessitated the intervention of the state for the sake of balance and order in society, which led to modification of the philosophy of individualism. The negative view of the state was now superseded by a relatively more positive view of the state and this new face of liberalism was shaped by the contributions of T.H. Green, L.T. Hobhouse, Harold Laski and others, many of whom were influenced by the ideas of Fabian socialism.

While till the 1970s this welfarist model worked more or less successfully, since the beginning of the 1980s as questions began to be raised regarding its efficacy, especially after the onset of globalization, when welfarism gave way to neo-liberalism whereby the spirit of classical liberalism was revived. However, what was new about this understanding was that earlier the emphasis was on the individual, while now the focus was on the market, the latter being considered as the arena where activities of the individual unfold themselves most freely.

2.3 Classicial individualism: J. S. Mill, Herbert Spencer

(a) J. S. Mill: Known as the greatest 19th century advocate of liberty and a great protagonist of democracy, J.S. Mill provided the best classical statement of individualism. State or state control is clearly an evil, despite the fact that sometimes such control becomes a necessity. One can never ensure that the state will function wisely at all times. Moreover, no government can claim supreme wisdom. Under such a situation the individual should be left to himself. That will ensure his liberty. In the society everyone should have the opportunity to do what one desires. But one may interject here and ask Mill how every individual can

get the opportunity to do what he desires without state protection unless we make the impossible assumption that nobody in society acts to the detriment of others. Mill cannot ignore the fact that in every society there are some individuals who behave in ways that are contrary to the interests of others. Moreover, normally well-intentioned men and women also may unknowingly or indirectly influence other men and women somewhat adversely. Anticipating such possibilities Mill would classify human actions into two groups: (a) actions that concern the performing individual only will be called "self regarding actions"; (b) actions which affect others will be called "other regarding actions". According to Mill, there must not be any state control or any dictation by political authorities in the case of self-regarding actions. But in the case of other regarding actions the state will have to step in and check the harmful tendencies/forces. In reality, of course, it will be difficult to differentiate between the two. And from a strictly sociological point of view such classification and differentiation may be utterly misleading, to say the least. The sociologist would tell us, man being a social animal by nature, all his actions are social actions (or other regarding actions). Exclusively self-regarding actions are imaginary phenomena. That is why critics have attacked this version of individualism by pointing out that as an ideal "individualism neglects the social causes and social results of actions." All human actions have their social roots (origins) and all human actions have their social consequences (results). Accordingly, there cannot be any social (human) action that can be left outside social (state) control.

The limitations of the individualist position are obvious enough. Nevertheless we may explore the individualist argument further to find out the strength, if any, of the argument. Thus one assumption behind individualism is that "every sane adult is the best judge of his own self." The presence of state authority as the 'supreme guardian' may only complicate the matter for the rational individual. When the state steps in to 'protect' or 'promote' anything that is a bad day for the normal, rational man. We need state action only to remove the 'obstructions' or 'stumbling blocks', only to punish the anti-social, the criminal and all those who hinder the normal activities of the rational individual. So the state is to act as the "hindrance of hindrances"—that is, the state will hinder or check all those elements—forces that operate as hindrances in the life of the normal individual. It is, then, a kind of 'police state' that the individualist will advocate. The state should have only police (i.e. negative) functions. There is no need for any positive, constructive, function on the part of the state. The normal, sane, individual does not need state help. Such normal individuals are the best judges of what is in their own interests. They are well aware of what constitutes for them a full or rewarding life. Mill defended his unique position from the utilitarian point of view also. While he deviated much from his master (that is, Bentham) in constructing and reconstructing his utilitarianism, he was clearly concerned with the well-being of the individual. Bentham presented a 'pleasure-pain' calculus to establish his utilitarian philosophy of the "greatest good of the greatest number". For Bentham, greatest good is greatest happiness. And happiness, its extent and intensity, can be measured, can be quantified. Mill, while appreciating the need to maximize the well-being (happiness) of the individual, did not think it necessary to estimate happiness in terms of larger quantity only. For him pleasure and happiness should be assessed in qualitative terms also. Ultimately Mill

emphasized that the end of life is not material utility but the dignity of man. Accordingly, one can distinguish between different kinds of pleasure by finding out which one promotes the sense of dignity in man. With dignity also comes good life. The individualist in Mill would like to see the state function in a way that removes obstacles before a person's self-development. Self-development is possible only when a person enjoys true liberty. The state should see that nobody causes harm to others by hindering their exercise of right to freedom, or their attempts to attain good life. So one man's liberty may be put under control if it causes harm to other persons' exercise of liberty. As Mill wrote in his book *On Liberty:* "The sole end for which mankind is warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self protection. That the only purpose for which power can rightfully be exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others."

Mill pleaded for the largest possible free initiative for the individual. A great advocate of the freedom of thought and opinion, that he was, Mill would never prescribe any suppression of views even when it is opposed to that of the brute majority. By upholding the right of the minority to dissent Mill was undoubtedly laying a strong foundation of democracy. Right to differ, right to oppose and the right to criticize are surely some of the great articles of democracy. And in that sense a form of individualism seems contributory to democratic ethos. What is called liberal democracy includes the essentials of individualism.

(b) Herbert Spencer : Considered as one of the early contributors to the discipline of sociology, Herbert Spencer, who too belonged to the 19th century, became famous for the organicist analogy by which he presented the similarity between social and biological organisms. And yet Spencer was also a great individualist. He explained the origins of society (and state) in individualistic and utilitarian terms. In his conception society and state operate as vehicles for the enhancement of the aims and purpose of the individuals.

Spencer argued that individuals bonded together to gain advantage. Men would give up isolated living and started living together as it proved more advantageous to them. Spencer saw the quality of a society as depending to a large extent on the quality of the individuals who formed it. He held it as a general principle that the properties of the units determine the properties of the aggregate. According to him, society must be free from the meddling of governments and reformers. The only power Spencer was willing to grant the state was protection of the rights of the individual and collective protection against outside enemies. The state had the duty not only of shielding each citizen from the tresspassing of his neighbours, but of defending him, in common with the community at large, against foreign aggression. The state may not do anything else, apart from providing such protection and defence.

Human relations, according to Spencer, develop as contractual arrangements. If the state intervenes it will distort the social order or lead to a return to the early forms of militant social order. As an evolutionist (in the line of Darwin) Spencer supports the doctrine of the struggle for existence, thereby advocating open competition among men and women. But then, evolution is a never-ending process. And if at some stage it allows development

through competition, at some other stage evolution may occur through adaptation. Modern writers do not approve the theory of 'struggle for existence' or the practice of cut-throat competition. As against such crude individualism it is now argued that the path of survival is the path of co-operation and conflict is the road to death.

Like John Stuart Mill Spencer also viewed the state as a necessary evil. But in the end Spencer would advocate an extreme individualism arguing that in reality the state is an aggressor rather than a protector. His defence of individualisms is strengthened by the condemnation of state interference.

2.4 Modern individualism : Friedrich Von Hayek, Isaiah Berlin

Individualism declined at the end of the 20th century. Socialist and collectivist theories gained prominence. In the first half of the 20th century the two world wars and the rise of fascism in the inter-war period indicated the end of an era of liberalism. If the rise of capitalism at one time demanded minimisation of state control, the same capitalism created innumerable social problems like increasing economic inequality, increasing poverty, increasing unemployment and various kinds of crime and delinquency associated with industrial towns and cities. And these problems would demand state regulation. That is why, in the 1930s it was not only fascism that emerged as a challenge to liberal individualism, but there also arose the new conception of welfare state to provide benefits to the common people.

The welfarist version of liberalism, which softened classical liberalism to a large extent, however, did not erode the claims of individualism. In the 20th century the spirit of individualism was revived along two trajectories. One version, represented by writers like Graham Wallas and Norman Angell, while questioning the growing power of the modern state, especially following the rise of fascism and the establishment of socialism in the Soviet Union, which justified the idea of a centralized and all-powerful state system, advocated individualism by adopting the strategy of pluralism in the sense that instead of pleading for total autonomy of the individual they argued in favour of group autonomy as a critique of the absolutist state. The other version focused on the importance of the individual vs state understanding, which in the post-War period became synonymous with defence of the legitimation of market, especially after globalization.

As regards the first version, it was different from the understanding of the traditional individualists from Hobbes to Mill (and Spencer), who were concerned with the need of self-preservation of the individual. In the changed circumstances of the closing decades of the 19th century and the opening decades of the 20th century the attention of the philosophers and politicians shifted from individual to group. Thus, for the modern individualists the principal theme of politics became : not "Man vs. the State but rather *Group vs. the State.*

Graham Wallas, who in his book *Human nature in Politics* introduced a new empirical orientation to political studies, raised the demand for a new realism in the understanding of

politics. Influenced by studies in sociology and psychology Wallas argued that man is not wholly a rational creature and that man's political actions are not totally guided by reason and self-interest. 'Human nature is far too complex for simple explanations' — he said. So, Wallas was not only opposed to the collectivist and statist approach to human problems (not considering the state as the panacea of all human problems), but also to the laissez-faire approach of the classical economists who emphasized man's economic self interest only. For political analysis Wallas left the important message that one must examine how people actually behave in political situations (thereby contributing to what is called behavioural analysis) rather than merely speculate on how they should behave. And for modern individualism Wallas made a strong argument that group interests need protection. Against the ever increasing power of state Graham Wallas would emphasize the importance of the individual by being a member of one or more social groups. Social groups and associations have their own personalities and their own interests that are just not transcended by any overall interest of the state. The other version was an attempt to revive the spirit of classical individualism in the new context, its two wellknown exponents being Friedrich von Hayek and Isaiah Berlin, who focused on the recognition of the importance of individual freedom, while staunchly defending anti-statism.

(a)Friedrich von Hayek : in his book *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) the eminent Austrian economist and philosopher Hayek argued that all collectivist efforts to implement total planning or social control can only lead to oppression and tyranny and hence to a kind of serfdom for millions. He concludes his book in the following words : "The abiding principle, that a policy of freedom for the individual is the only truly progressive policy, remains as true today as it was in the 19th century" and thereby contributes to the revival of individualism in a new, modern form. What is called neo-liberalism today owes much to Hayek's social and political philosophy.

Since the last two decades of the 20th century individualism earned a new base of life, albeit in a different form, in the shape of neo-liberalism. President Ronald Reagan of U.S.A. and Prime Minister Margret Thatcher of UK were the political mentors of this neo-liberal ideology. But the philosophical roots of this ideology can be traced back to the last years of World War II, when Hayek wrote this book. It appears noteworthy that about four decades after its first publication, such a book could earn distinction for being recognized as the philosophical base of the fiercely anti-statist, market-oriented, individualist ideology of the New Right. The New Right gives a call to 'roll back' the state. The state need not be welfarist. The New Right is the ideological trend within the conservative world view that embraces a blend of market individualism and state authoritarianism. And now this New Right has become almost synonymous with neo-liberalism. Like the 19th century individualists the neo-liberals also believe that unregulated market capitalism will deliver efficiency, growth and widespread prosperity. Hayek was a firm believer in the market order and individualism. Additionally he was, like Karl Popper, an inveterate critic of socialism and collectivism. Andrew Vincent has made an interesting observation in this context. He has pointed out that from Locke to Hayek the central thesis of liberalism has been that 'private

property is the embodiment of individual liberty' (John Gray), property being an extension of bodily rights, which has to made secure from arbitrary state action, be it in the form of state absolutism or state socialism. That is why Hayek is easily viewed as the philosopher of neo-liberalism.

(b) Isaiah Berlin : A leading British political philosopher of liberalism in the twentieth century, Isaiah Berlin, provided a new understanding of liberalism by invoking the concept of liberty. Deviating from the standard liberal understanding that freedom of the individual has to be viewed in the context of anti-statism, Berlin made a distinction between two concepts of liberty, namely, negative and positive, in a famous essay which he wrote in 1958. By negative liberty he meant absence of obstacles external to the agent, that is, a person is considered free if he is not stopped from doing whatever he wants to do. By positive liberty he meant presence of control on the part of the agent, that is, the agent is able to determine or control his own destiny. Negative liberty, therefore, is about *absence* of something (that is, obstacles, barriers, constraints or interference from others), while positive liberty requires *the presence* of something (namely, of control, self-mastery, self-determination or self-realization). In Berlin's words, we use the negative concept of liberty in attempting to answer the question "What is the area within which the subject — a person or group of persons — is or should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be, without interference by other persons?", whereas we use the positive concept in attempting to answer the question "What, or who, is the source of control or interference that can determine someone to do, or be, this rather than that?" In this context Berlin has drawn our attention to the authoritarian implications of the positive concept of liberty. In the name of self-control, positive determination of the factors which would shape the society, those who are in power might make abuse of state power by suppressing dissent, repressing the minority voices and resorting to authoritarian practices. As a die-hard liberal this, in fact, was an expression of Berlin's critique of Soviet socialism in the period of Cold War, when, indeed, abuses of human rights and repression of dissent took place on a large scale in the erstwhile Soviet Union.

2.5 Critical assessment

The philosophy of individualism, which is inseparably connected with the spirit of liberalism, has thus traversed a long journey. Its central focus has been the idea of freedom and autonomy of the individual against interference of any kind, the most important institution in this regard being the state.

Historically speaking, individualism originated in the period following the Glorious Revolution in England in late 17th century. The debate raised by the English Civil War and Locke's *Second Treatise* got expression in the assertion of parliamentary government on the one hand and in the individualistic emphasis on freedom of association, right to life and private property on the other. However, writers like Leo Strauss, Michael Oakeshott and C.B. Macpherson would find in Hobbes's writings the real foundational elements of liberal

individualism. Hobbes asserted that each man acts always with a view to his own benefit and that most of the good things in life are inherently scarce and that accordingly there is nothing called supreme good or final end of human life. In reality, men remain engaged in an incessant pursuit of the ever changing objects of their desires. Hobbes's liberal outlook also got expression in his egalitarian affirmation of the principle of equal liberty of all men in the state of nature and also in his rejection of purely hereditary title to state power. And, as Leo Strauss points out, in Hobbesian political theory the power of the state finds its absolute limit in the natural and inalienable right of the individual for self preservation. In Locke's conception of civil society, again, it was a society of free men, equal under the rule of law, bound together by no common purpose but sharing a respect for each other's rights. In these ideas the early contractualists in England provided not only the essentials of individualism but also certain fundamental ingredients of liberal democracy. In the hands of J.S. Mill and Herbert Spencer it is this idea, which basically highlights the libertarian spirit, was further developed.

The great merit of individualism lies in its emphasis on self-reliance. By opposing needless government interference and by discouraging dependence on state-aid, the individualists highlight the value of the individual. From the times of Locke to the twentieth century uncompromising defence of freedom has been the cornerstone of individualism. The fall of socialism in the Soviet Union, the advent of globalization and the failure of a number of welfarist states in the West to deliver the goods in the 1970s created conditions for the rise of the "New Right", fierce ant-statism being its underlying philosophy. This further strengthened the claims of individualism in the twentieth century, which became almost synonymous with neo-liberalism. Individualism today does not just plead for ant-statism but it cannot distance itself today from the philosophy of neoliberalism, its exclusive focus on the market being a logical extension of anti-statism. But the rise of neoliberalism poses a big question too for individualism. Since the central concern of individualism is autonomy and freedom, is it not a fact that the overarching dominance of the market threatens these values, as the individual is completely powerless in the face of the unbridled market forces?

In fact, the greatest drawback of the ideology of individualism lies in its neglect of the collective effort. Co-operation and collective action constitute the firm grounds of a democratic order. Moreover, so long as human societies remain stratified, and thereby many people suffer from various disabilities, it is unwise to minimise the role of the government. The poor, the disabled, the depressed will suffer more and more if, in the name of combating the state the individualist prescribes withdrawal of all welfarist activities, including financial aid or food-aid by the government. Amartya Sen in his writings has raised this question many times, arguing that it is violative of the very principle of justice, when we are living in conditions of inequality. The same concern was to a large extent voiced by John Rawls.

2.6 Sample questions

Long questions :

1. Write an essay on the tradition of classical individualism.
2. Examine the notion of modern individualism with reference to the views of Friedrich von Hayek and Isaiah Berlin.

Medium questions :

1. Write a note on J.S. Mill's contribution to the development of individualism.
2. Attempt a critical assessment of the philosophy of individualism.

Short questions :

1. Why is Herbert Spencer considered as a classical individualist ?
2. What, according to Isaiah Berlin, are the two concepts of liberty?
3. What are the drawbacks of individualism ?

2.7 Bibliography

A. Andrew Vincent : *Modern Political Ideologies.* Third edition (West Sussex : Wiley-Blackwell,2010).

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Unit 3 □ Conservatism

Structure

3.1 Objectives

By reading this Unit the students will be acquainted with the following :
(a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with an overview of conservatism.
(b) The central doctrine of conservatism.
(c) An historical overview of secularism.
(d) The political implications of conservatism.
(e) Critical assessment of conservatism.

3.2 Introduction

Although as a political ideology conservatism is generally associated with the idea of restoration and is thereby believed to be an outlook that is stubbornly opposed to change, it is not easy to identify its character. The difficulty arises from the fact that conservatism as a doctrine has assumed different meanings in different historical contexts. Thus, although in Europe conservatism came to be associated with the outlook shared by the exponents of restoration of the old order in the aftermath of the French Revolution and it is generally believed that the birth of this idea is to be traced to nineteenth century, Andrew Vincent has shown that it is possible to provide at least five different contextual interpretations of conservatism. While in France the term was first coined by Chateaubriand's journal *Le Conservateur* in the 1820s, in Britain the term appeared for the first time in 1830 in the journal *Quarterly Review.* This corresponds to the first meaning of conservatism, which meant a negative doctrine of reaction, expressed by a semi-feudal, agrarian and aristocratic class, for whom the ideas of the French Revolution constituted a major challenge. This challenge of a class which was politically and economically on the decline, persisted for more than a century, broadly from 1790 to 1914. Second, it has sometimes been considered

as a kind of political pragmatism, since it vows to defend the established order which may, paradoxically, be based on statism or libertarianism. Third, conservatism does not espouse any ideal but simply stands for the defence of the institutionalized way of life, which it wants to leave unchallenged and undisturbed. Fourth, conservatism is believed to be a part of life itself and is thereby considered natural in the sense that it legitimises what is given, habitual and tested and is averse to the notion of uncertainty and the call of the unknown. Finally, the Enlightenment, rise of liberalism and the spread of revolutionary ideas evoked the conservative response. The idea that human beings can change the social and political order by using the power of reason, that they can dream of some good society of the future, that to attain this goal the sanctity of tradition, privilege, hierarchy and authority needs to be questioned produced the conservative response which questions the very idea of human intervention.

3.3 The central doctrines

Anthony Quinton has identified three central doctrines underlying the ideology of conservatism. These are : traditionalism, scepticism and organicism. First, traditionalism believes that change is upsetting and distressing, especially when they are sudden. This disturbs the rhythm of life and thereby stability and order. This does not mean that conservatism is totally averse to change. Edmund Burke, a leading British exponent of conservatism, admitted that unless some means of change are available, a state cannot conserve itself. But, for the conservatives the change has to be gradual, and not sudden, so that unplanned, unpredictable side effects can be counteracted. Conservatism is particularly critical of revolutionary change, since revolutionary events unleash violence, chaos, instability and uncertainty.

Second, conservatism is deeply sceptical of newly acquired political knowledge and experimental political practices. It believes in the tested political wisdom of the past, in the efficacy of established laws and institutions. It believes that the task of management of public affairs should be best left to those who have extensive political experience. It is thereby critical of liberalism, with its focus on natural rights and autonomy of the individual on the one hand and also of projection of Utopian visions of the future, which provide alternative, imaginary understanding of a better future, on the other.

Third, conservatism is anchored in the understanding that society and human beings are organically related, that human beings are nurtured by the social fabric, by the language and culture of the society in which it is born. Conservatism, therefore, is intensely nationalist in orientation and contests the notion of cosmopolitanism/universalism and dismisses the idea of the essential unity of mankind.

3.4 Historical Overview

Although it is generally believed that the French Revolution constitutes the watershed of conservative thought, scholars like Russell Kirk consider Plato as the originator of conservative outlook. Then in the Middle Ages when the idea of divine right of kings went into circulation, together with the idea that government is ordained by God, that non-resistance and passive obedience are religious duties, the conservative outlook was further strengthened. In the eighteenth century it was David Hume who strengthened it further. 1789-1914, which constitutes the most important period of conservative thought, witnessed its further development in the writings of Edmund Burke. For him the French Revolution professed the idea of radical change, espousing the view that human beings are equal and can reach perfection. For him this was unacceptable. In the nineteenth century conservatism reached a new height in the writings of Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, Henry Maine and W.H. Lecky in Britain, who expressed their deep cynicism about enfranchisement of the masses. For the exponents of conservatism, a distinction had to be made between the "people" and the "rabble", the criterion of difference being that people with property had some right to be represented, but not the ignorant rabble or mob. The underlying assumption was that stability and common good of society were related to property ownership.

Interestingly, conservatism has an anti-capitalist streak also, when in the writings of Justus Moeser, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Cobbett, Charles Maurras and T.S. Eliot critiques were advanced against industrialization and individualism, the argument being that in the name of industrialization through progress of science and technology what is happening is the erosion of community, order, tradition and religion.

Conservatism, therefore, has diverse historical roots and it is, indeed, difficult to systematize its historical antecedents. This has resulted in the problem of classification of the types of conservatism. To take the cue from Andrew Vincent, a five-fold classification of the variants of conservatism, however, can be attempted.

(a)Traditional conservatism : its central focus is on the importance of preservation of custom, convention and tradition. Edmund Burke was the leading theorist of this kind of conservatism, which believes that the state is a communal enterprise with spiritual and organic qualities and the Constitution is not a human artefact but a product of cumulative political experience and practice. Change, if it takes place, is not the result of reasoned thought but flows out of the traditions of the community. Leadership, authority and hierarchy are also natural products the sanctity of which need not be questioned.

(b) Romantic conservatism : A number of German theorists like Moeser and Novalis, and English conservatives like Wordsworth, Walter Scott and T.S. Eliot represented the spirit of romantic conservatism. They shared nostalgia for a quasi-feudal past, since they were terribly dismayed by the alienation of man under industrial capitalism and commercialization of life and society. The romantic conservatives favoured a form of life which would be simple, religious, free from the problems of industrialization and be ruled by communal sentiments instead of selfish individualism.

(c) Paternalist conservatism : In the interest of promotion of good life for the citizens this wing of conservatism, which flourished primarily in Britain, argues that the state cannot, after all, abdicate its responsibility towards the community and its citizens. It strongly believes in the role of the state in guaranteeing decent housing, working conditions, wages and treatment of the poor. Paternalist conservatism was critical of Thatcherism, since the latter, it alleged, in the name of defending free economy ignored the dominant value of conservatism by putting premium on the economic rather than on the political aspect.

(d) Liberal conservatism : The maxim of liberal conservatism is opposed to that of paternalist conservatism, that is, it gives priority to economics rather than to politics. At times indistinguishable from classical liberalism, it is sceptical of state, emphasizes individualism, negative liberty, personal rights and a minimal rule-of-law state. Friedrich Hayek's name may be considered in this context. Basically it becomes tantamount to a defence of the right to property, the origins of which can be traced back to the conservative ideas of Edmund Burke.

(e) New Right conservatism : This is very close to liberal conservatism and is deeply anchored in the anti-totalitarian critiques of the 1950s, as advanced by Leo Strauss, Friedrich Hayek and Michael Oakeshott. Their critiques of socialism and all kinds of statism later squared with the failure of Keynesian welfarism in the West in the 1960s and 1970s. The New Right's unbridled support of free market, however, does not go well with the neo-conservatism of scholars like Roger Scrutton, Irving Kristol, Russell Kirk and Maurice Cowling, who dismiss paternalistic as well as liberal conservatism with equal fervour. For the neo-conservatives the focus is on nationalistic fervour, patriotism, national culture, purity of race, natural inequality, importance of disciplined family life and patriarchal authority and compulsory Christian religious education. Understandably, this does not fit in well with the libertarian thrusts of the New Right.

3.5 Political implications

Conservatism has interesting implications for (a) religion, (b) property, (c) nation and imperialism, (d) law and the constitution and (e) liberty, equality and democracy.

(a) Religion : Conservatism views church as an indispensable support to the state in ensuring social order and stability. For the conservatives religion constitutes the core of social life, the reference of Burke to the divinely ordained character of the state being a case in point.

(b) Property : the conservative position on property is somewhat different from the right-wing liberal understanding in the sense that unlike libertarians and individualists conservatism considers property as a trust rather than a matter of absolute right of use and disposal. Property, for the conservatives, carries with it responsibilities as well as rights. Since it is protected by the state, the conservative position is one of allowing the state to tax it. In principle, conservatism champions the cause of

property, since it enhances independence and self-reliance, whereas welfarism, by distribution of doles, encourages passivity and inertness.

(c) Nation and imperialism : conservatism, as pointed out earlier, does not share the liberal view of a universal mankind. Rather it espouses the cause of the nation and is thereby nationalistic in orientation. But it is not necessarily imperialistic in orientation, since it does not, at least in principle, believe in improving the conduct of another state or its people by taking charge of another country simply by annexing it. Only when clear national interests are involved it becomes the responsibility of the government to settle conflicts with other nations.

(d) Law and the constitution : For conservatism law is a product of customs, which are historically shaped and articulated, and so the conservative understanding suggests that it stands opposed to the rule of arbitrary authority. Law, therefore, needs to be recognized and respected. By the same logic it is argued that the constitution, the highest law, which determines the making of a law, not only bears the stamp of special sanctity; but it should be changed least often and least rapidly. The core of this argument is explained by the idea that laws and constitutions are historically formed and, therefore, should not be unnecessarily questioned and disturbed.

(e) Liberty, equality and democracy : conservatism does not consider any of these principles or ideals as abstract universal values but judges them only in terms of their historical relevance. Thus, it does not attach much importance to liberty in general but upholds traditional, customary, established liberties. Since it does not favour giving absolute power to the government, it endorses the preservation of a large area for the private activities of individuals and of the non-governmental associations or institutions. As regards equality, conservatism does not identify equality with justice and does not view it as a universal principle to be recognized. Justice, for the conservatives, is a procedural issue and it is to be seen that no discrimination is made in regard to the access to justice. In other words, conservatism is not concerned with the socio-economic, substantive value of equality.

3.6 Critical assessment

The claims of conservatism are questioned on the following grounds. These criticisms are directed against the theoretical foundations of conservatism, as explained earlier, namely, traditionalism, scepticism and organicism. First, as regards traditionalism, it is argued that the very notion of a sacred and inviolable body of customs and traditions is so mythical and historically unfounded that it is unacceptable. Moreover, it is also not clear how little changes have to be distinguished from big changes in social and political circumstances of a state and its people. What would be the yardstick of judging these changes ? The conservative understanding is vague and uncertain.

Second, the notion of scepticism in regard to political beliefs, which characterizes conservatism, is unacceptable to its critics. This is a kind of understanding that closes inquiry, criticism and questioning on one level and sanctions dogmatism and closure on another level. It cultivates rigidity and discourages flexibility and openness. Besides, it is unscientific too, if in the name of scepticism a kind of blockage is encouraged.

Third, the argument of organicism is questioned by the critics on the ground that it denies the creative role of the individual in relation to his circumstances and the organic structure of which, the human being, of course, is a part. Organicism not only encourages a kind totalitarianism, but also denies the fact that, while it is true that human beings are products of certain given circumstances and their actions too are shaped by them, human actors too react on the circumstances in their very own creative manner.

3.7 Sample questions

Long questions :

1. Attempt an historical overview of conservatism.
2. Examine the political implications of conservatism.

Medium questions :

1. Examine the central doctrines underlying conservatism.
2. Attempt a critical assessment of conservatism.

Short questions :

1. How is organicism related to conservatism ?
2. What is the meaning of Romantic conservatism ?
3. How does conservatism justify its defence of traditionalism ?

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Unit 4 ☐ Secularism

Structure

4.1 Objectives

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

(a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with an overview of secularism.
(b) The relation between secularism and modernity.
(c) The dimensions of secularzation
(d) Some representative viewpoints regarding secularism in India.

4.2 Introduction

The *shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word secular as follows: belonging to the world and its affairs as distinct from the church and religion. It is viewed chiefly as a negative term with focus on the non-ecclesiastical, non-sacred and non-religious. The secular is that which is not concerned with or devoted to the service of religion. The secular affair is the sphere of worldly, unspiritual affairs. In the same *Dictionary* secularism is defined as the doctrine that espouses the idea that morality should be based solely in regard to the well-being of mankind in the present life, to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in God or in an imaginary future state. To secularize something or somebody is to convert the same from religious or spiritual state into the material or temporal state.

The Dictionary meaning is very clear. Political Science writers seem to adhere, by and large, to this meaning. Secularism is understood by them as the belief that religion should not intrude into worldly affairs and such understanding is usually reflected in a desire to separate the religious institutions from the state.

As regards the origin of the term "secularism" it was first used by a British writer George Jacob Holyoake in 1851. By "secularism" he intended to describe the idea of promoting a social order separate from religion, without actively dismissing or criticizing religious belief. He himself was an agnostic himself and argued that "Secularism is not an argument against

Christianity, it is one independent of it. It does not question the pretensions of Christianity; it advances others. Secularism does not say there is no light or guidance elsewhere, but maintains that there is light and guidance in secular truth, whose conditions and sanctions exist independently, and act forever. Secular knowledge is manifestly that kind of knowledge which is founded in this life, which relates to the conduct of this life, conduces to the welfare of this life, and is capable of being tested by the experience of this life."

Barry Kosmin classifies secularism into two types: hard and soft secularism. By hard secularism he means that religious propositions are epistemologically illegitimate, since they are not justified by either reason or experience. Soft secularism believes that the attainment of absolute truth is impossible and instead of taking a confrontationist position vis-a-vis religion it believes that scepticism and tolerance should be the guiding principles in the discussion of science and religion.

4.3 Secularism and Modernity

Secularism is understood as a socio-cultural phenomenon associated with the idea of western modernity. However, it draws its intellectual roots from Greek and Roman philosophers like Marcus Aurelius and Epicurus of the ancient world, Enlightenment thinkers like Diderot, Spinoza and Locke, from freethinkers and atheists like Robert Ingersoll and Bertrand Russell. Although the common sense understanding of secularism is based on the idea that it is anti-religious and thereby godless, this is not correct. It is directed not against religion and thereby is not anti-religious. Rather it is non-religious or areligious.

Secularism emerged in Europe following the Renaissance. The 15th century revival of classical culture and learning, which, again, largely drew its inspiration from ancient Greece, also ushered in a process that we call modernity. Both the processes of secularism and modernity highlight the rational and egalitarian aspects underlying human (social) relations and it is this human dimension which differentiates the secular from the theocratic viewpoint. As from around the 15th century the feudal religious order declined, the modern, rational/ secular order gradually started taking shape. In that sense the secular is the modern and vice versa. In fact, a person cannot be truly secular if such person fails to be rational and modern in his/her approach. The rational person judges and then decides on a policy by using the power of reason. The modern rational man would not accept anything unless it is explained by reason. Doubts will be raised and following the resolution of such doubts (to one's satisfaction or as far as possible) acceptance or consent is given. Since religion is a matter of faith and belief, which is highly personal, and does not belong to the public domain, the modern rational man would keep the religious subject apart from matters of public concern. For the modern man religion cannot have any concern for the worldly affairs. That is why the modern man becomes a secular man. The modern secular man becomes non-religious in his mundane everyday activities. He is not necessarily anti-religious.

With the advent of industrialisation in the west the non-religious elements turned increasingly powerful. As the processes of secularization gained ground, the impact of

religion on temporal affairs (especially on political life) became restricted. The spread of liberal culture and ideas strengthened secularism. The secular and critical approaches would characterize the new political cultures that were taking shape after the industrial revolution and the French revolution. The relations between modernization, industrialization, secularism and liberal culture are declared as very integral and close . As Andrew Heywood observes, "A key feature of liberal culture is the...public/private divide. This established a strict separation between a public sphere of life in which people are free to do as they like...(this has) important implications for the religion which is fenced into a private arena, leaving public life to be organized on a strictly secular basis." Heywood further argues that in bringing about the privatization of religion, secularization has extended the public/private divide into a distinction between politics and religion. And we also know that one of the postulates of modernity (that has come down to us from Machiavelli and Renaissance through the writings of a large number of philosophers) is to maintain a strict separation between politics and religion . So, once again we can say that the secular is the modern. Machiavelli's contribution to the interlinking of secularism and modernity needs to be especially highlighted in this context. While he was the first representative of modernity in politics, it was he who very categorically highlighted the importance of keeping separate the two domains of religion (private) and politics (public).

4.4 Dimensions of Secularizaton

Sociologists tell us that with the development of modern societies, religion underwent a serious decline. Secularization refers to the declining influence of religion. But we are in no way to conclude thereby that as a set of traditional and obsolete beliefs and customs religion has come close to a vanishing point. For religious institutions are not actually disappearing. Apart from the established religious systems in different countries, hundreds of sects and cults can be found existing in different parts of the world. Surveys done by sociologists in different states and regions show that quite a large majority of people are 'believers' and 'religions minded'. Accordingly, to understand what kind of relation is there between the 'state of religion' today and secularization, one can refer to the various aspects or dimensions of secularism and religion.

The eminent British sociologist Anthony Giddens refers to the following three dimensions of secularism and religion to resolve the question of 'declining religion' and 'growing secularization':

(a) *Level of membership of religious organizations:* there is no reliable data concerning the number of devotees visiting the temples, mosques or churches in the developing countries. However, in the more developed countries there is sufficient evidence indicating a pattern of declining religious observance.

(b) *Social influence:* religious organizations exercise great influence in traditional societies. They command great respect from the people. But in modern times

religious groups have lost much of the influence they had earlier on the social and political institutions.

(c) *Religiosity:* religious men may not regularly attend churches or visit mosques and temples. On the contrary, those who visit religious places frequently may not necessarily be all very devoted peoples. That is why an estimate of religiosity of the people becomes difficult. However, newer historical studies have shown that a large number of people, while formally offering prayers or doing some rituals, do not actually inculcate deep religiosity. In many cases ordinary men and women show only lukewarm commitment to religious beliefs and institutions.

The nature of the three dimensions noted above reveals that, while it is very difficult to measure the levels of secularization, the influence of religion is declining. Giddens observes, "although the influence of religion has definitely declined, religion is certainly not on the verge of disappearing." The process of secularization, thus, is getting strengthened. Religion is not dead, but the hold of religious beliefs today is definitely less than what it was in the traditional world.

There is a view that the resurgence of Islam and the growth of religious fundamentalism have been thwarting the advance of the process of secularization. The argument is made that in the coming years the number of secular conflicts and contradictions will appear much smaller than the increasing number of religious conflicts and wars. In this connection we can refer to Samuel Huntington's book *The Clash of Civilizations and the making of World Order* where the author advances the thesis that in the twenty first century international conflict and warfare will be caused by the clash of the major civilizations of the world like Islam or Christianity. When conflicts are organized more on the lives of religious communities dominating one or another civilization (say between Christians West and Middle East Islam), the situation can hardly be described as one that is marked by growing secularism or declining religion. But then such a thesis is yet to be tested. Presently there is no reason to doubt the advancing trend of secularization in the modern age.

A secular society can thus be characterized as one which refuses to commit itself as a whole to any one view of the nature of the universe and the role of man in it. It espouses the cause of pluralism and advocates the sphere of private decision-making. It believes in the following ideals, namely, respect for individual and groups, equality of people, dismissal of boundaries of class and caste. While being an enlightened outlook it is, however, quite often associated by its critics with modernist ideologies like Stalinism as well as Nazism and secularism is also viewed as an expression of atheism.

4.5 Secularism in India : Some representative viewpoints

In colonial India, we know, the Britishers introduced a kind of modernization for setting up the minimum infrastructure necessary for the continuation of colonial rule and exploitation. Introduction of Railways, a modern education system and a system of rule of law were some

of the modernizing programmes. According to the eminent Indian sociologist, MN Srinivas, British rule also brought in its trail a process of secularization of Indian social life and culture, "a tendency that gradually became stronger with the development of communications, growth of towns and cities, increased spatial mobility, and the spread of education." Srinivas further asserts that the two world wars and Mahatma Gandhi's civil disobedience campaigns, both of which socially and politically mobilized the masses, also contributed to increased secularization.

After independence the process of secularization deepened and broadened further and at a faster rate, first owing to the declaration of India as a secular state [by inserting the word "secular", by the 42nd amendment (1976) in the Preamble to the Constitution of India] and, secondly, by constitutional recognition of the right to equality, right to religion etc. and finally by introducing universal adult suffrage on the one hand and the system of decentralized government (of Panchayati Raj) on the other.

An important feature of secularism is rationalization, which involves the replacement of traditional beliefs and ideas by modern, scientific knowledge. In the villages also politicization of caste and secularization of culture have made social life freer than before. The old ideas of pollution and purity are fast declining. Even where the dalits and depressed (the so-called untouchables) are apparently the victims of caste disabilities, the motive force designing the exploitative action of the superior Varna-Hindus presents itself in the form of political power and contestation, that is, by adopting secular idioms.

In recent years the issue of secularism has sparked off major debates in India. Broadly, there are two quite opposite interpretations involved in this debate. On the one hand there is a viewpoint represented by Asish Nandy, T.N. Madan and their followers who argue, drawing their clues largely from postcolonialism, that the kind of secular state that Jawaharlal Nehru aimed at building up in India, was the expression of a colonized mind, since the western notion of modernity, in which the concept of secularism is rooted, is essentially hegemonistic in orientation in relation to the non-western societies. Therefore, uncritical appreciation of the Western idea of secularism/secularization legitimizes domination and control. Consequently, it does not take into account India's very own cultural uniqueness, the meaning of which cannot be grasped by using western categories of modernity like secularism.

The other viewpoint is represented by scholars like D.E. Smith and Amartya Sen. Smith in his classic study *India as a Secular State* tried to define a secular state in the following way: the secular state is one that guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion, does not seek either to promote or interfere with religion and deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion. It is clear that like many others Smith also emphasises the question of separation of state and religion. But unlike many, again, Smith would point out that a mere separation of religion from the state does not guarantee religious freedom. In reality absolute separation of religious institutions and the state may not be found. And in India, thinks Smith, a thorough going separation of state and religion does not exist. But the supreme quality of India's secularism is found in the fact that India *has no state religion,* nor does it give any constitutional recognition to Hinduism as the religion of the majority of citizens. On the

other hand, the existence of sizable and influential religious minorities is another factor that strengthens secularism in the Indian state. "The minorities", writes Smith, "are the natural custodians of the secular state." Smith also very rightly refers to Nehru as the great champion of secularism. Nehru provided leadership as the first Prime Minister of India and that must be one great reason for the solid foundation attained by India's secular political institutions.

Amartya Sen also has paid tribute to Nehruvian secularism in India. In an essay entitled "Secularism and its discontents" Sen argues that it is a good sign that criticism of secularism is becoming a part of the common sense of the Indian middle class. After all an ideology like secularism directly affects people and for that reason when people would debate on such ideology it could offer a better and broader perspective for India's participatory democracy. Sen thinks that when such debates linger, when discontents are expressed in various ways that would only make everybody (including the people's representatives) more cautious but that can in no way undermine the basic case of secularism in India. It is hard to escape the fact, thinks Sen, that it is necessary to see India as an integrally pluralist society, and to accept the necessity of symmetric treatment and secular politics as crucial elements of that recognition.

4.6 Sample questions

Long questions :

1. Attempt an overview of the multiple dimensions of secularization.
2. Write a note on the relation between secularism and Modernity.

Medium questions:

1. Explain the emergence and meaning of secularism.
2. Examine some of the representative viewpoints concerning the meaning of secularism in India.

Short questions:

1. What is the difference between "hard" and "soft" secularism ?
2. What, according to Giddens, are the three dimensions of secularism ?
3. What is Asish Nandy's critique of secularism in India ?

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Unit 1 □ Justice

Structure

1.1 Objectives

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

1. Meaning of Justice and its relevance in the tradition of western political thought
2. Meaning of Distributive Justice and Procedural Justice
3. Distinction between Distributive and Procedural Justice
4. John Rawls as an exponent of Procedural Justice and his idea of justice as fairness
5. Robert Nozick's Entitlement Theory of Justice
6. Communitarian Idea of Justice
7. Amartya Sen and Justice as capabilities and freedom
8. The Feminist Critique of the Western notion of Justice and Martha Nussbaum's Idea of Justice

1.2 Introduction

Justice is an important concept and value in the discussion of political philosophy. It is, however, difficult to define. In a broad sense, it includes both the attainment of that which is just and the philosophical discussion of that which is just. Again the word 'just' implies various things. It may be regarded as that which is consistent with 'morally' or 'ethically'

correct; or that which is 'legally' or 'rightly' correct; or the component of fairness may be regarded as important in being just. This is why, the concept of justice may be analysed and examined from different perspectives: from religion, theology, ethics, philosophy, law, politics and so on. Apart from different perspectives, the concept of justice may vary from time to time and from place to place. What may be regarded as a just act in ancient Greece may not be regarded as so in contemporary India.

In ancient Greece Plato outlined a theory of Justice in his *Republic*. Plato tried to establish true nature of justice in his book and painted an ideal state which would be an embodiment of justice. To Plato, justice is one of the four principles of justice, the other three being temperance, wisdom and courage. Subsequent to the Greek idea of justice, the western political philosophy showed less concern for justice, particularly during the middle age, when divinity was invoked and the idea of natural justice was more discussed. Emphasis was placed more on divine command theory arguing that justice issues from God. With the gradual secularization of politics following the Age of reason and Scientific Revolution, theorists like John Locke argued for natural justice setting the limits and provides the direction for civic justice via the concept of natural rights.. Thinkers in the social contract tradition argued that justice is derived from the mutual agreement of everyone concerned. In the 1800s, utilitarian thinkers like John Stuart Mill argued that justice is what is right and what has the best consequences.

From the 1970s, theories of distributive justice have become most prominent in the discussion and tradition of justice. John Rawls, the most widely discussed exponent of distributive justice used a social contract argument to show that justice, and especially distributive justice, is a form of fairness. Property rights theorists like Robert Nozick, a contemporary of Rawls take a consequentialist view of distributive justice and argue that property rights-based justice maximizes the overall wealth of an economic system. The modern communitarian idea of justice is rooted in the Aristotelean conception of moral theory. And believes in common good and therefore attacks the welfare liberal conception of justice. Theories of retributive justice are concerned with punishment for wrongdoing. Restorative justice is an approach to justice that focuses on the needs of victims and offenders.

1.3 Distributive Justice

The resources in this planet are limited while the necessities of people are not. That is why, there have been several theories regarding how resources are to be distributed amongst people 'justly'. There have been some who argue in favour of equal distribution of resources, but it also invites problems as people's merit, capabilities and needs are different. As such theories have been evolved as to how goods and commodities can be distributed amongst people in a just manner leading to a tradition of distributive justice.

Distributive Justice is primarily aimed at a just distribution of goods. Theories of distributive justice seek to specify what is meant by a just distribution of goods among members of society. Everybody, for instance, in India realizes that different people have diverse ownership of goods and commodities and on the basis of that people may be termed as rich, propertied, poor and so on. One may wonder what lies behind the distribution of goods, what principles allow unequal distribution of goods and which kind of distribution of goods may be termed as 'just' distribution or 'fair' distribution.

It can be said that distributive justice primarily aims at establishing social justice. Whenever the question of just distribution or fair distribution evolves, it entails two things: first, through distribution, the society tries to provide justice to every individual, or in other words, through just distribution of goods and commodities, social justice is to be established, and, secondly, this fair distribution is to be done on some criteria under the over-all supervision of the society, that is, the state in the political parlance. The issue of establishing social justice through fair distribution of goods under the guidance of the state is more or less accepted; the question is on which criteria. Theorists differ on this issue and offer several criteria.

Generally, theorists of distributive justice consider three criteria for distribution of goods and services. These are: desert, merit and need. The desert is derived from an old French word, which means 'to deserve'. It means that someone deserves a reward on the basis of some of his works and it may so happen that someone else deserves punishment for a work that he did. In other words, reward or punishment is the consequence of some work or effort on the part of the individual. Similarly, merit also implies some reward, while lack of merit or failing some punishment. In other words, it can be said that 'desert' and 'merit' are inextricably related. These, however, are not very simple and any such statement may invite some criticism or complications. For instance, in case of 'desert', which work deserves reward and which punishment may have some non-difficult contours in most of the cases, but may not be so in some others. For instance, it has been found on several occasions in Indian poor household that children, although enrolled in schools are unable to attend classes regularly as they have to help to do different work either in household or outside to support the family. While attendance in classes deserves to be rewarded in case of students, while non-attendance does not; it cannot be said summarily that deserving reward and punishment on the basis of work necessarily leads to justice. Similarly, in case of merit too, it is well known that merit gets reward while lack of it merit does not; here also it can be said that in case of students, many cannot, particularly in Indian poor families, afford to study due to many of their duties in household leading to lack of merit. These complications lead to diverse kinds of theories in distributive justice in the tradition of Western political philosophy.

The third important criterion of distributive justice is need. Apparently, it is less complicated than the other too as it implies that greater need requires greater resources. But it also entails complications as in case of this criterion, the issue of merit or capability is ignored. Moreover, the question of need is also relative. Someone may need just a manual hand fan

during summer, some may find it difficult to remain in a room without an air-conditioning system. Thus, need is also relative and it cannot involve justice if resources are distributed on the basis of one's need only without 'desert', merit or capabilities.

Whatever the criterion may be, it cannot, however be denied that distributive justice has the element of community in it. To them, society is not just a collectivity of individuals, who are living together, but aims to establish justice, which is , in fact, its ultimate 'end'. Thus, individuals tend to be less 'individualistic' and with the intervention of the state tries to be fair to each other, thereby bringing justice in society.

1.4 Procedural Justice

Procedural justice primarily differs from distributive justice on the ground that it does not believe in distribution of goods for establishing fairness in society on the basis of some abstract principles. Each individual is considered to be an end in itself and has entitlements that are individual in character. This kind of justice also believes that the state has no role to interfere in the matter of individual entitlements and in fact, it would be terribly unjust to do so. It is easy to see the components of individualism more and lesser area of state intervention in Procedural Justice.

Procedural Justice is based on a close association with market economy. It is argued by the proponents of market economy that market, if it be allowed to work freely and in an uncontrolled manner , that is without the intervention of the state, then it would make the best and efficient use of resources. Any attempt to tamper with this would lead to an unjust system, not fair to anyone and detrimental to everyone. Besides, intervention would have to be based upon on some generally agreed principle of either desert or merit or need, which is difficult to arrive at as in a free society there can be no general agreement about what constitutes desert or how need is to be measured. They believe that fairness can be achieved in a free competition, which is fair, that is which is free from force or fraud.

Procedural justice, in fact, lines up with individual liberty and freedom. Any infringement on that is considered to be unfair and hence unjust. Thus, the individual is solely responsible for his/her entitlements and no one has to think about his fellow colleagues or citizens or people, or in short, no one has to think about society. This brings in many uncomfortable and unresolved questions to one's mind. Is it possible to be so individualistic so as to be totally indifferent to others? History has also shown that uncontrolled market economy not only leads to gross economic inequalities but also to lop-sided and ill development of the economy. Individual freedom and liberty are no doubt cherished values but the question comes: to what extent or how far? Another pertinent question arises, in this context: Is it possible for all people of the society to enjoy freedom and liberty. The answer is certainly not; at least not to an equal or same measure. This implies that some people enjoy freedom at the cost of others, which again is definitely not fair and therefore not consistent with establishment of justice.

1.5 Rawls' Theory of Justice: Justice as Fairness

John Rawls, a Harvard professor of philosophy and one of the most influential political philosophers of 20th century came out with a brilliant defence of social justice in his magnum opus *A Theory of Justice* in 1971. In "A Theory of Justice," Rawls sets forth the proposition that "Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. Therefore, in a just society the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests." This leads him to a situation, which in his own words is a perfect procedural justice, which is to be distinguished from imperfect procedural justice. As he was aware that it is difficult to create a situation of perfect procedural justice and under imperfect procedural justice, unjust conditions might be created, Rawls suggests that under controlled conditions rational human beings would choose principles that would uphold ideas consistent with the basic idea of distributive justice.

Rawls begins his work with the idea of justice as fairness. He identifies the basic structure of society as the primary subject of justice and identifies justice as the first virtue of social institutions. Rawls points out that justice exists only when every departure from equality is rationally justified. The question is how to make unequal distribution of goods and services justified. In order to justify inequality, Rawls took the help of the contractarian tradition. However, Rawlsian contractarianism, unlike that of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau is abstract or implied and closer to that of Kant, who also did not talk about any contract directly; but in his idea of the 'universal state' and 'necessary good', the idea of contract remains implied.

To Rawls, people in the 'Original Position' were engaged in deciding the principles of justice. These people were rational and self-interested but remained under a 'veil of ignorance' without any information about themselves or about others. Thus, people in the original position know nothing about their particular abilities or disabilities, likes or dislikes, and position or status within the social order of society. This ignorance extends in case of others too. The Original Position thus represents a procedure for negative and morally arbitrary advantages that some individuals might have over others. Hence, they would choose those principles for establishing, which would maximize the position of the worst-off or the least advantageous, assuming that when the veil is lifted, they themselves may turn out to be the worst-off.

Such people, according to Rawls would choose the following two principles:

First, each person to have rights equal to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others; and,

Second, social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that

(a) they are to be of the greatest benefit to the least-advantaged members of society,

(b) offices and positions must be open to everyone under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

The first principle is known as the equality principle and the second the difference principle. These principles are so arranged by Rawls that the first principle comes first and the second thereafter. Thus, there is no possibility of individual liberty being compromised for the liberty of others. It also ensures that any departure from the principle of inequality must benefit the least advantaged, or in other words, inequalities should be so arranged that they benefit the worst-off. This order of the principles determines the priorities of the principles if they conflict in practice. The principles are, however, intended as a single, comprehensive conception of justice—'Justice as Fairness'—and not to function individually.

1.6 Robert Nozick's Theory of Justice: The Entitlement Theory

Robert Nozick, a colleague and contemporary of Rawls published *Anarchy, State and Utopia* in 1974, which is regarded as a libertarian answer and a critique of Rawls' idea of distributive justice. Nozick classifies theories of justice as (1) either end-result or historical, and (2) either patterned or unpatterned. His entitlement theory is historical and unpatterned. It does not demand that the distribution resulting from just acquisitions, transfers and rectifications be patterned, i.e. correlated with anything else (such as moral merit, need, usefulness to society); people may be entitled to things got by chance or gift. Any distribution, irrespective of any pattern it may or may not have, is just provided it has the appropriate history, provided it did in fact come about in accordance with the rules of acquisition, transfer and rectification. Rawls's theory on the other hand, is an end-result theory. Choice of principles behind a 'veil of ignorance', must be based on calculations about what people are likely to end up with under the various possible sets of principles - there is no other way of choosing.. Therefore if any historical entitlement theory is correct, Rawls's approach is wrong.

Thus, to Nozick, there are three sets of rules of justice, defining:

1. how things not previously possessed by anyone may be *acquired*;
2. how possession may be *transferred* from one person to another; and
3. what must be done to *rectify* injustices arising from violations of (1) and (2).

A distribution is just if it has arisen in accordance with these three sets of rules and if no fraud or force is used in the acquisition of property. He, however, allows rectification if unfair practices have been followed in the acquisition of property. If, however, some individuals without any force or fraud and following any of the principles are able to amass huge property, Nozick would not allow for any redistribution of property. By arguing in this way, Nozick favours a minimal state which would have no role in distribution. By limiting the role of the state, Nozick hopes to ensure individual liberty. This, he believes, would help individuals to take initiative and to use their reasoning effectively creating conditions for protecting individual freedom. Thus, he negates distribution of goods and services as the basis of justice and emphasised upon one's entitlement as the rationale behind establishing justice.

1.7 Communitarian Ideao of Justice

Communitarianism is a philosophical tradition that emphasizes the connection between the individual and the community. Although by community, one may mean a family, normally by community is meant a collection of interactions, among a community of people in a given place (geographical location), or among a community who share an interest or who share a history. Communitarian philosophy is derived from the assumption that a person's individuality is the product of community relationships, rather than a product derived only from personal traits.

Although communitarianism as a philosophy originated in 20th century, its root may be traced in the Aristotelean idea of civic republicanism based on the concepts of civic virtue and civil society. However, it was not until the 1980s that communitarianism was established as a political philosophy and the term "communitarianism" gained currency through association with the work of a small group of political philosophers, mostly American. It was through the work of Michael Sandel published in 1982 titled *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* that communitarianism became a philosophy that challenged liberalism as ontologically and epistemologically incoherent and opposes it on those grounds. Unlike classical liberalism, which construes communities as originating from the voluntary acts of pre-community individuals, it emphasizes the role of the community in defining and shaping individuals. Communitarians believe that the value of community is not sufficiently recognized in liberal theories of justice.

The origin of communitarianism in the last century may be regarded as a response to John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*. Communitarians criticize the image of human beings that Rawls presents in his theory as atomistic individuals, and stress that individuals who are well-integrated into communities are better able to reason and act in responsible ways than isolated individuals, but add that if social pressure to conform rises to high levels, it will undermine the individual self. Communitarians uphold the importance of the social realm, and communities in particular. They argued that contemporary liberalism and libertarianism presuppose an incoherent notion of the individual as existing outside and apart from society, rather than embedded within it. To the contrary, they argued, there are no generic individuals but rather only Germans or Russians, Berliners or Muscovites—or members of some other particularistic community. Because individual identity is partly constructed by culture and social relations, there is no coherent way of formulating individual rights or interests in abstraction from social contexts. Thus, according to the communitarians, there is no point in attempting to found a theory of justice on principles decided behind Rawls' 'veil of ignorance', because individuals cannot exist in such an abstracted state, even in principle.

Thus, communitarians therefore opine that individuals abstracted from their social, economic and cultural contexts cannot make any rational choice or reasoned argument. Under a veil of ignorance, individuals cannot make choices that are relevant in an actual social context. Communitarians argue that individuals are determined by their communitarian

contexts and the choices they make are determined by their notion of good or bad. This notion of good, according to communitarians, is not a consequence of individual rational thinking but is created and held together by what the community— to which the individual belongs— thinks of as being good.

1.8 Justice, Capabilities and Freedom

The idea of justice has, in recent years, been discussed by the noted economist and philosopher Amartya Sen from what is called 'capabilities' approach. In his *The Idea of Justice* published in , Sen developed an idea of justice which, may be regarded, on the one hand an extension of Rawlsian theory of justice and, on the other, a critique of Rawls. As can be noticed, that Sen is much disturbed by the problem of global justice, but he sees this as symptomatic of much wider problems with Rawls' project, and *The Idea of Justice* can be understood as an attempt to respond to these wider problems. Indeed, the book *The Idea of Justice* almost takes the form of an implicit dialogue with Rawls and the Rawlsians, and it is worth noting that Sen has dedicated this work to John Rawls.

Sen accepts the general proposition of Rawls that justice should be understood as fairness, but finds many features of Rawls' model troubling. First, there is the contractarian nature of Rawls' work, which requires us to see justice as the product of an agreement among members of a clearly defined society; Sen agrees with those critics of Rawls who find this problematic under modern conditions. Rawls assumes for the purpose of his model that societies are discrete, self-sufficient, self-contained entities into which people are born and which they leave by death. This is clearly not the case in reality, and, even if it were, decisions made within one society can have serious consequences for others—one only has to consider the issue of environmental degradation to see that this is so. The point is that if justice is defined as the product of a contract, the interests of non-contractors—foreigners, future generations, perhaps nature itself—may well be neglected. This is actually a common criticism of Rawls and Rawlsians have suggested that perhaps the whole world should be regarded as a "society" for the purposes of this social contract. As Sen points out, however, this will not do—the idea of society presumes a degree of global unity that simply does not exist. It is the very idea of basing justice on a contract that is problematic, not the details of the contract.

The second criticism against Rawls is his claim to create an "ideal theory", which Sen calls a "transcendental" approach to justice, the desire to create an account of justice that is universal and necessary, that applies everywhere, and at all times. Sen doubts that a single account of this kind is either possible or necessary. There are many possible theories of justice.. The idea that there is only one kind of just society—a liberal society defined by principles set out in Rawls's model—and that all others represent a falling off from this ideal does not seem a plausible response to the pluralism that undoubtedly exists in the modern world.

The third point that Sen raises against Rawls concerns the importance placed on establishing just *institutions*. The basic idea here is that if you can get the institutions right you do not need to worry about actual human behaviour.

Here Sen is particularly innovative and illuminating. Drawing on the Sanskrit literature on ethics and jurisprudence, he outlines a distinction between *niti* and *nyaya*; both of these terms can be translated as "justice," but they summarize rather different notions. *Niti* refers to correct procedures, formal rules, and institutions; *nyaya* is a broader, more inclusive concept that looks to the world that emerges from the institutions we create, rather than focusing directly on the institutions themselves.

In his book, Sen presents his theory of theory of capabilities. The main argument is to emphasize that the capability approach is essentially a theory about human freedom, or more precisely, a theory about how freedom should be factored into the assessment of advantage and disadvantage. The Capability Approach is defined by its choice of focus upon the moral significance of individuals' capability of achieving the kind of lives they have reason to value. As against welfarists, Sen points out that we care not just that we achieve what we want, but also how we achieve what we want. We should be interested in "comprehensive outcomes", not just "culmination outcomes". It focuses directly on the quality of life that individuals are actually able to achieve. This quality of life is analysed in terms of the core concepts of 'functionings' and 'capabilities'. It has been employed extensively in the context of human development, for example, by the United Nations Development Programme, as a broader, deeper alternative to narrowly economic metrics such as growth in GDP per capita. Here 'poverty' is understood as deprivation in the capability to live a good life, and 'development' is understood as capability expansion.

1.9 Feminist Account of Justice

One of the central debates within the feminist theory of justice revolves around the question of whether there is a specifically female way of moral reasoning distinct from the universal, objective and impersonal ethic of justice that much of political theory works with. Carol Gilligan, one of the exponents of care ethics argues that women were different from men. They developed in a way that focused on connections among people (rather than separation) and with an ethic of care for those people (rather than an ethic of justice). Gilligan lays out in her book titled that there are two distinct ethics correlating to two distinct conceptions of subjectivity: abstract individual and connected individual. It is, unfortunately, this abstract, unconnected, self-centred, egoistic individual that gets highlighted in the liberal tradition of justice, most notably exemplified in Rawls' theory of justice. This abstract individual is manifested by men and the connected self by women. Women's morality is characterized by care, nurture, love, values and peace. This is the ethic of care, while the impartial, objective, universal framework is the male ethic of justice.

Some feminists like Catharine Mackinnon have disputed the dichotomy and argue that this kind of argument reaffirms the existing sexist stereotypes of women's traditional roles.

There is no inherent element in women which prevents them from being rational and objective and similarly no one would like to believe that men are incapable of loving and nurturing. That is why, the overwhelming feminists would like to reconcile the two ethics. They point out that an ethics of care could be made effective only if it is grounded in justice. They would rather see care and justice as complimentary to each other.

1.10 Conclusion

In this Unit, you have learnt there cannot be any one way of looking at the concept of justice. You have come to know how the ancient view of Plato on justice had complete turn-around in the modern age by Locke and other thinkers of the liberal tradition. You have learnt the view of social justice illustrated most notably in the modern age by John Rawls. In the process, you have come to know that within the liberal tradition, how the two ideas of justice, namely distributive and procedural differ in their ways of looking at the role of the state and the question of the dynamics of market. The communitarian and the feminist critique of Rawls' idea of justice have been examined, while the extension of Rawls' idea to include capabilities for expansion of freedom by Amartya Sen has also been explored. From these diverse of ideas of justice, you have understood that justice can be examined and analysed from different perspectives.

1.11 Points of Remember

After reading this Unit, you should remember the following points:

- The liberal tradition of justice seeks to ensure fairness for individuals
- The egalitarian tradition of liberalism believes in redistribution of goods and commodities according to deserve, merit or capabilities
- The very idea of redistribution, however, adds the element of community in this tradition of justice
- The libertarian tradition of justice, however, believes in maximizing individual freedom and does not allow the intervention of any external force like state and therefore rules out redistribution
- The contemporary liberal tradition of justice gets its finest expression in Rawls' theory of justice, which argues in favour of redistribution of goods and commodities according two principles, called the equality and difference principle.
- Although very influential , it has been criticized by the libertarians by Robert Nozick for being too concerned about collectivity; by communitarians like Michael Sandel for being too individualistic and by feminists like Carol Gilligan and Catharine Mackinnon for not taking into consideration the ethics of care into the idea of justice
- Although criticized on certain points, Amartya Sen accepted the basic premise of Rawls and extended it by including the element of capabilities for increasing individual freedom

1.12 Sample Questions

Long Questions

1. Distinguish between Distributive and Procedural Justice.
2. Critically discuss Rawls' theory of Justice.
3. How do the Communitarians criticise Rawls? Narrate their view on Justice.
4. Discuss Amarty Sen's idea of justice.

Medium Questions

1. Discuss Robert Nozick's Entitlement Theory of Justice.
2. Examine the feminist account of justice.

Short Questions

1. What do you mean by 'veil of ignorance'?
2. What are the three rules of justice, according to Nozick?

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Unit 2 □ Equality

Structure

2.1 Objectives

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

1. What equality means
2. How equality finds a place in the tradition of equality
3. What are the things that can be equalized
4. Does equality negate difference? Or, in other words, Are Equality and Difference complementary or opposing to each other?
5. How cultural difference reconciles or opposes equality
6. The need of Affirmative Action to promote equality
7. How equality is politicized

2.2 Introduction

Human beings are immensely, inevitably and inherently diverse and unequal. While we are different in terms of height, weight, gender, skin colour, hair colour that is the attributes

which we are born, human beings are also different in terms of the religions that we profess, the languages that we speak, the cultural mores with which we are brought up and so on. Apart from these ascriptive and social differences, we are also unequal in terms of what we can achieve in our life, like the kind of education one has, the amount of property one possesses, the political power that one has. These inequalities again lead to different kinds of social status resulting into further inequalities.

One may argue after reading this that if inequality is the basic component of human beings, why should we talk about equality? What is the need of equality? And even if one agrees the necessity of equality, is it feasible, plausible or possible to establish equality amongst human beings? Finally, what are the areas in which one can attempt to establish equality?

It should be mentioned that although human beings are different and unequal in different respects, there is no denying the fact that equality is one of the most cherished values and all efforts should be made to establish it amongst human beings, simply because that if we remove different dimensions of inequalities, we can find the very essence of human beings, which is humanity. Our capacity to feel pain and sufferings, capacity to experience love and affection are capacities that have a moral resonance. These are moral capacities that are universal to humanity. In other words, there is something common in our collective experience that forms the core of our egalitarian beliefs.

The concept of equality lies at the core of normative political theory. Along with other political values like justice and liberty, equality offers us a moral framework that we draw upon to make political judgments and explain, analyze or criticize certain political views and forms of political action.

2.3 Evolution of the Concept of Equality

The history of political philosophy is replete with passionate references to the ideal of equality. Starting from the ancient Greek philosophy down to the contemporary 21st century political theory, the value of equality has evoked some of the strongest human passions.It is, however, true that the ideal of equality has undergone some major transformations and what was quite equal at a particular time has been expanded and extended to include some other elements to make equality really meaningful.

In ancient Greece, we find elements of equality in Aristotle's writings, particularly in his *Athenian Constitution*, where Aristotle talked about egalitarian reforms that could be initiated for the governance of the city-states. At the same time, we know that the Greek city-states did not look at her citizens equally as the metics (foreigners) , slaves and women were outside the purview of citizenship. Aristotle's *Politics* documents and justifies this exclusion. Thus Aristotle defends natural inequality and then proposes a corresponding equality among certain sections of the people, notably the free males.

Some scholars point out that until the renaissance social inequality served as the criterion

of partitioning people according to the privileges that they were allowed to have. It is only with the advent of modernity and the age of reason that the question of equality has come to the forefront of public domain and debate. Hobbes, one of the major philosophers of 17th century defends a view of natural equality between all humans in the state of nature. Locke thereafter extended the ideal of equality when he talked about equal rights within a governed society. Locke describes the state of nature as one of equality, wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another; there being nothing more evident, than that creature of the same species and rank, promiscuously born to all the same advantages of nature, and the use of the same faculties, should also be equal one amongst another without subordination or subjection. Because man is free and equal in the state of nature, he must be assured that he will still be so when he enters society, thus for Locke the establishment of the state occurs on the basis of assured equality without which there would be no incentive to enter into society.

Some scholars are of the view that guillotine served as a great equalizer during the French revolution. Without going into the debate of whether the demand for equality necessarily requires violence, we can simply submit the fact that the French revolution championed the value of equality along with liberty and fraternity. The French revolution declared that the individuals must be liberated from their old restricting contexts of village communities, guilds, monasteries and large families. The privileges of nobility and church should be abolished. Everybody should become free and equal individuals only bound together as brothers in the nation. These ideas found a place in the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu and Diderot. A few decades later during the middle of the 19th century, Tocqueville wrote on the basis of his experience of the flowering of democracy in United States that the love of the people for democracy and their love for equality are intertwined. He believed in the inevitable advance of democracy and equality. He believed that this advance was part of modernization.

A completely different call for equality could be noticed from the writings of Marx, who also belonged principally to 19th century. His views can be described as a critique of the liberal tradition of equality. He also criticised his contemporary socialists as utopian for their inability to account for the materialist conception of history. Similarly, a different plea for establishing gender equality could be noticed in the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft.

During the beginning of 20th century the ideal of egalitarian liberalism could be noticed in the writings of L.T. Hobhouse, later exemplified best in the writings of John Rawls.

2.4 Why is Equality Needed?

Students have got a fair idea about the need to establish equality among human beins in the Introduction. You will get to know in this section the various theoretical arguments for establishing equality.

First, in today's world, equality is considered as an autonomous value, that is it is not

required to establish something else. It is an end in itself. No one can deny its importance today.

Secondly, equality is required in order to be fair. For instance, it is unfair to award two different marks to two students who have performed identically in an examination. In the absence any other moral reason for an unequal distribution, fairness requires equality.

Thirdly, equality enjoins a duty to show respect to others. Showing equal respect implies recognizing that all people have capacities to deliberate for themselves and to engage in activities and relationships that are considered to be intrinsically valuable.

Finally, equality is necessary to foster fraternity. Inequalities are objectionable because they place barriers to friendship, community and love.

2.5 What to Equalize

In any discussion on equality of individuals, the foremost question that comes is: what exactly are to be distributed? Scholars generally identify three indices of equality: welfare, resources and capabilities, which are principally concerned with distributional aspect of society. Besides, there is an alternative conception of equality, which is neither distributional nor its competitor but a kind of complementary to it. It is called complex equality. These different aspects of equality may now be discussed:

2.5.1 Equality of Welfare

Utilitarians generally argue that distributional equality means distribution of welfare. Welfare is here understood primarily in two ways: According to classical utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham, welfare is understood as happiness, which is the net balance of pleasure over pain. The contemporary welfare theorists consider welfare as desire or preference satisfaction. In deciding which preferences matter most to a person, the person must be able to decide that with his own reasoning in the context of full information to satisfy his own interest most.

2.5.2 Equality of Resources

Resource egalitarianism is most expressly identified with John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin. According to Rawls, political resources are to be distributed equally amongst persons; while social and economic resources are to be distributed in such a way that it goes to the benefit of the least advantaged. Dworkin's idea of equality is sometimes called the equality of what. In a famous pair of articles and his book *Sovereign Virtue* he advocates a theory he calls 'equality of resources'. This theory combines two key ideas. Broadly speaking, the first is that human beings are responsible for the life choices that they make. The second is that natural endowments of intelligence and talent are morally arbitrary and ought not to affect the distribution of resources in society. Like the rest of Dworkin's work, his theory of equality is underpinned by the core principle that every person is entitled to equal concern and respect in the design of the structure of society.

2.5.3 Equality of Capabilities

The noted economist and philosopher Amartya Sen pioneers the idea that distributional equality should concern itself with equalizing people's capabilities, instead of emphasising resources and income. A capability is the ability to achieve a certain sort of function. For instance, literacy is a capability while reading is a function. A state therefore should work positively to promote people's ability to read that is literacy.

2.5.4 Complex Equality

The notion of Complex Equality was proposed by Michael Walzer in his *Spheres of Justice*.In Spheres of Justice, he argues that in formal terms, complex equality means that no citizen's standing in one sphere or with regard to one social good can be undercut by his standing in some other sphere, with regard to some other good. Thus, citizen X may be chosen over citizen Y for political office, and then the two of them will be unequal in the sphere of politics. But they will not be unequal generally so long as X's office gives him no advantage over Y in any other sphere – superior medical care, access to better schools for his children, entrepreneurial opportunities, and so on. To achieve a situation of complex equality, Walzer proposes a system of blocked exchanges: it should be avoided that goods obtained in one sphere are exchanged to obtain goods in another sphere. For instance, the money person X has acquired in the economic sphere should not be used to 'buy' power and influence in the political sphere.

2.6 Difference, Equality and Recognition

To the notion and value of equality, a major turn could be noticed since the mid-twentieth century, when difference begins to be recognized as a positive and significant value. Historically, the black is beautiful slogan that inspired the mobilization for civil rights in the US signals to the cultural turn that decades later was to bring recognition of difference to the forefront of a vast array of demands articulated by social movements around the world. A deep cultural transformation can be seen as cause and consequence of new ways to conceive of the world. A world in which individuality, subjectivity, and chosen identities, acquire renewed importance.

Indeed, the resurgence of difference as a salient positive feature of society is one of the deep cultural transformations that we observe in the contemporary world. The importance that identity issues have acquired today leaves no margin to doubt: the modern notion of individualism that made room for the value of equality, now shares the space with demands for the recognition of collective differences chosen by individuals as legitimate loci of loyalty. Instead of the attributed differences that in pre-modern times justified the hierarchical ordination of society, now it is still based on the equality of individuals that people express their subjectivity and claim the right to freely choose identities that differentiate them from others.

In contemporary world, recognition became the sine-qua-non target in claims for equality that mobilize gender, colour, ethnicity, religion, language or any other possible specificity that implicitly or explicitly have been used to deprive groups of people of the equality that traditionally grounded notions of membership in national communities. Furthermore, more and more we observe demands for the recognition of particular identities posed by groups that do not see their particularity as in conflict with national identity. Many now claim for the recognition of their group distinctiveness and see it as a condition to affirm their individuality.

2.7 Culture and Equality

By premising difference and recognition on equality a new ideology has evolved in recent years, which is called multiculturalism. In simple terms, multiculturalism is the cultural diversity of communities within a given society and the policies that promote this diversity. As a descriptive term, multiculturalism is the simple fact of cultural diversity and the demographic make-up of a specific place. Multicultural ideologies or policies vary widely, ranging from the advocacy of equal respect to the various cultures in a society, to a policy of promoting the maintenance of cultural diversity, to policies in which people of various ethnic and religious groups are addressed by the authorities as defined by the group they belong to. Multiculturalism is often contrasted with the concepts of assimilationism and has been described as a "salad bowl" " or "cultural mosaic" rather than a "melting pot".

Multiculturalism is considered to be more positive toward equality and can genuinely establish equality in this world of inequalities by recognising differences. Mere toleration of group differences is said to fall short of treating members of minority groups as equal citizens; recognition and positive accommodation of group differences are required through "group-differentiated rights," a term coined by Will Kymlicka, a noted exponent of multiculturalism. Some group-differentiated rights are held by individual members of minority groups, as in the case of individuals who are granted exemptions from generally applicable laws in virtue of their religious beliefs or individuals who seek language accommodations in schools or in voting. Other group-differentiated rights are held by the group qua group rather by its members severally; such rights are properly called group rights, as in the case of indigenous groups.

Recognising cultural differences through promoting group rights has, however, been criticised on several grounds like:

1) preserving or protecting a culture runs the risk of privileging one allegedly pure version of that culture, thereby crippling its ability to adapt to changes in circumstances;
2) there are no group rights, only individual rights. By granting cultural groups special protections and rights, the state oversteps its role, which is to secure civility, and risks undermining individual rights of association;
3) multiculturalism is a "politics of recognition" that diverts attention from a "politics

of redistribution";

4) liberal multiculturalism's idea of equality has been questioned by some and some have argued that religious and cultural minorities should be held responsible for bearing the consequences of their own beliefs and practices;
5) extending protections to minority groups may come at the price of reinforcing oppression of vulnerable members of those groups—what some have called the problem of "internal minorities" or "minorities within minorities".

However, in spite of these criticisms, multiculturalism has been able to establish itself as a significant theory of promoting equality.

2.8 Affirmative Action

Affirmative action or positive discrimination is the policy of favouring members of a disadvantaged group who are perceived to suffer from discrimination within a culture, in order to establish true equality. Affirmative action is intended to promote the opportunities of defined minority groups within a society to give them equal access to that of the majority population. Affirmative action policies are those in which an institution or organization actively engages in efforts to improve opportunities for historically excluded groups. Affirmative action policies often focus on employment and education. In institutions of higher education, affirmative action refers to admission policies that provide equal access to education for those groups that have been historically excluded or underrepresented. Controversy surrounding the constitutionality of affirmative action programs has made the topic one of heated debate.

In this context, it may be mentioned that India's experiment with affirmative action is the world's oldest. Known in India as "reservation" policy it is an elaborate quota system for public jobs, places in publicly funded colleges, and in elected assemblies. These are filled by members of designated, disadvantaged groups. India's constitution of 1950 enshrined the idea of discrimination as a means to help both "scheduled" groups, which was to build on limited quotas for jobs and education that were used in parts of British-run India from the 1920s. It proposed that the policy exist for a decade to see what progress would be made, but without spelling out how to measure it. The provision has been renewed every decade since the implementation of the Constitution.

2.9 Conclusion

In this Unit, you have learnt that equality, although a very important value in human society, has different ways of looking at it Although equality remains a very important value, it evokes diverse ideologies and diverse viewpoints regarding not only how to establish equality but also regarding 'equality of what' and equality of whom'. While equal distribution of wealth remains important to the socialists, marxists and social democrats, welfarism

became very dominant in the 20th century to justify egalitarianism. Since 1980s however, welfarism was showing signs of decline and more right—wing politics is replacing the desire to establish through redistribution of resources via more tax and more welfare activities.

From late 20th century onwards, the trend and emphasis are more towards equality of whom rather than on equality through redistribution of resources. Egalitarians are increasingly shedding their individualist bias and are keener to engage in concerns surrounding inequality between groups that owe more to non-material factors. Thus the very word equality has become polemical and hence a source of political conflict and hence political too.

2.10 Points to Remember

After reading this Unit, you should remember the following points:

- Although human beings are unequal in almost every apparently visible respect, they belong to the same species and share one most common trait called humanity. Therefore, in spite of the visible differences that they have, establishing equality is a necessary aspect of political philosophy since ancient days and is revered as a very important value.
- However, during the ancient days, the idea of equality was treated not in the manner that we treat today and has elements that could very well perpetuate the existing social, political and economic inequalities.
- The age of Reason, the onset of modernity, the age of enlightenment have been able to bring forth, amongst other things, the value of equality. The famous slogan of the French Revolution highlighted the necessity of bringing in equality in society.
- Scholars have put forward several reasons as to why equality is needed, the most important being the fact that equality is a very significant autonomous value, that is it is an end in itself.
- There have been debates regarding the items that should be equalized. Some talk about equality of resources, while the more modern view is on equality of capabilities.
- Recently, there has been a thrust on differences and theories and debates are going on as to how equality and difference could be accommodated leading to the rise of the ideology of multiculturalism.

2.11 Sample Questions

Long Questions

1. How has the concept of equality developed in western political philosophy?
2. Mention the different theories regarding equality.
3. How does multiculturalism try to accommodate equality and difference?

Medium Questions

1. Mention the reasons for which equality has been regarded as an important value.
2. What is Complex Equality?
3. What are the criticisms against multiculturalism?

Short Questions

1. Discuss Dworkin's idea of equality.
2. How does affirmative action seek to establish equality?

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Unit 3 □ Freedom

Structure

3.1 Objectives

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

1. What freedom means
2. How the concept of freedom has evolved in the tradition of western political philosophy
3. How freedom can be categorized
4. Does negative and positive freedom mean two different things?
5. How freedom is related to other concepts like equality. Or, in other words, are freedom and equality complementary?

3.2 Introduction

We very often use the word freedom in our conversation. When we discuss freedom, we usually mean the rights people should always have and be able to exercise in any situation. In other words, we primarily mean freedom as the right to do as we wish. But normally, we also use a caveat whether implicitly or explicitly to freedom that it is our right to do whatever we wish to do provided it does not harm others' freedom or ability to exercise their right to do as they wish.

This would suggest that there is no such thing as "absolute freedom", that is, the freedom that would allow one to do whatever he wishes no matter if it negatively affects others. If you would give someone an "absolute freedom", you are essentially stripping everyone else of all rights. That wouldn't even deserve to be called freedom. It is akin to dictatorship, absolutism—the rule of one over all others.

Therefore, freedom has to have certain self-preserving restrictions and it comes exactly from that second part of the principle we've mentioned above: "provided it does not harm others' freedom or ability to exercise their rights"—this is essentially the ironic restriction that must be in place for everyone in a society to be equally free.

In this Unit, we will discuss these intricacies surrounding freedom and the various meanings associated with freedom.

3.3 Meaning

Freedom is a very big term and may mean different things to different people. Freedom and liberty may often be used interchangeably. Freedom in philosophy, involves free will as contrasted with determinism. In politics, liberty consists of the social and political freedoms guaranteed to all citizens. In theology, liberty is freedom from the bondage of sin.

Freedom in the vocabulary of politics or political freedom has become a watchword of the French revolution along with equality and fraternity. Political freedom may mean a kind of political autonomy, although these words are very difficult to define. However, there is no denying the fact that it is a central concept, idea and value in Western history and political thought and one of the most important features of democratic societies. It may be described as a relationship free of oppression or coercion; the absence of disabling conditions for an individual and the fulfilment of enabling conditions; or the absence of lived conditions of compulsion, e.g. economic compulsion, in a society. Although political freedom is often interpreted negatively as the freedom from unreasonable external constraints on action, it can also refer to the positive exercise of rights, capacities and possibilities for action, and the exercise of social or group rights. The concept of political freedom is closely connected with the concepts of civil liberties and human rights, which are usually, afforded legal protection from the state in a democratic society.

3.4 Evolution of the Concept

As we have noticed, freedom is a very big term encompassing many perspectives, views and ideas by different political philosophers depending upon the larger political philosophy to which they belong. It is to be mentioned here that like equality, freedom or liberty has also gained currency in the vocabulary of political philosophy with the onset of the modern age. In this respect we first come across the idea of freedom in the writings of Thomas Hobbes, in his fictional state of nature. In fact, it was the contractarian tradition — in the

writings, of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau— that developed an idea of freedom. The utilitarians— and particularly John Stuart Mill, developed specifically the idea of liberty in his writings. Marx and Engels had a different view of freedom, which primarily had an economic connotation. Let us look at these views one by one.

3.4.1 Contractarian tradition

Thomas Hobbes' (1588-1679) use of the term 'liberty' in *Leviathan* is ultimately derived from his materialist philosophy, which lays great stress on the concept of 'motion' in the physical world. He conceives of liberty in terms of the ability of an object to move without constraint or obstruction: 'Liberty, or Freedom, signifies the absence of Opposition or external impediments to motion and may be applied no less to Irrational, and Inanimate creatures, than to Rational'. Hobbes's definition of a free man is 'he, that in those things, which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindered to do what he has a will to'. Thus, a man may be at liberty to decide whether or not to enter a building through an open door; he is able to enter, or not to enter, according to his will; if he decides freely not to enter, he still retains that same liberty in full measure. If, however, the door is locked, his liberty to enter is impeded by the external agency of the locked door. Thus there is a naturally-present quality of liberty in every human being, defined by his or her strength and individual inclinations, which is restricted only in so far as external forces restrict it. Thus, all have liberty to do all that they can in the cause of preserving their own lives; and furthermore, whatever action someone believes is necessary to preserve his or her own life, is justified – the decision is left entirely to that person's 'own Judgment, and Reason'.

John Locke (1632-1704) has been one of the most influential writers on liberty. Thomas Jefferson ranked Locke as the most important thinkers on liberty. Locke helped inspire Thomas Paine's radical ideas about revolution. From Locke, James Madison drew his most fundamental principles of liberty and government. Locke's writings were part of Benjamin Franklin's self-education, and John Adams believed that both girls and boys should learn about Locke. The French philosopher Voltaire called Locke "the man of the greatest wisdom. What he has not seen clearly, I despair of ever seeing."

Locke wrote one of the most powerful defences of individual liberty in his *Second Treatise of Government*. According to Locke, in the state of nature, human beings enjoyed what he called "perfect freedom" to enjoy their persons and properties "as they think fit". Thus, liberty to Locke is a natural right and as a natural right, it is innate in human nature, is universal, is inalienable and can be apprehended by reason. It is a right equally held by all in the state of nature.

This natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but to have only the law of nature for his rule. The liberty of man, in society, is to be under no other legislative power, but that established, by consent. Thus, Locke was very much concerned with freedom of the individual from arbitrary power. The Lockean individual is guided by the faculty of reason in the exerciser of freedom in conditions that are alterable. So, the Lockean individual will not

seek the freedom to fly like a bird but seek the freedom to be heard even in minority.

Jean Jacque Rousseau (17712-1778) considered freedom as a collective venture and as freeing oneself from selfish motives for a larger good of the entire group. His conception of liberty liberates human beings from the hierarchical and unjust inequality of society. Rousseau views this inequality as the constraint in the realization of liberty. Unlike Hobbes and Locke, liberty is not a natural right for Rousseau. Liberty for him is a liberation from unfreedom which comes into being with the rise of civil and political society.

For Rousseau, a man is liberated through obedience to law. Law is equated with expression of general will of the whole community. The individual in obeying the laws obeys one's own self as the author of those laws, authored by the virtue of the capacity of uniting with others in the community.

3.4.2 Utilitarian tradition

According to utilitarianism, utility is the only intrinsic good. Actions and precedents are judged right or wrong in proportion to their propensity to produce the most happiness or pleasure, for the greatest number. Utilitarians see a positive correlation between freedom and pleasure. Freedom is about seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. **Jeremy Bentham**'s (1748-1832) writings echo this view perfectly. Liberty to Bentham is viewed through the utilitarian maxim of 'greatest good (happiness) of the greatest number'. Bentham believed that utility could be measured quantitatively through what he called a hedonistic calculus. Bentham believed that seeking happiness was an inherent part of human nature, and that happiness could be measured as a matter of quantity. Each person is their own judge when it comes to happiness, but when it comes to the greatest happiness (or felicity, as he called it), a person can really only be so happy if others around them are happy, too. He called this the greatest happiness (or felicity) principle. The greatest happiness depended upon the circumstances, upon the community in which one finds them, and — this is the reform impulse — upon how they sought to maximize harmony, comfort, and happiness with their closest friends and neighbours.

This simplistic understanding freedom within the utilitarian framework has been fine-tuned to a great extent in the works of **John Stuart Mill**'s (1806- 1873) *On Liberty*. Mill's views on liberty are grounded on his understanding of utility 'in the largest sense grounded on the permanent interests of man as a progressive being'. His principal emphasis is to protect individual liberty from the interference of state and society. He takes the concept of liberty beyond the utilitarian doctrine of Bentham by holding the view that a proper conception of happiness includes freedom as individuality. For Mill, individuality is a pre-requisite for the cultivation of the self. Mill discusses liberty under three aspects: liberty of thought and expression, principle of individuality and limits of authority over an individual's action.

3.4.3 Marxian tradition

Marx, however, put forward a completely different view of human freedom. Marx objects to this classical political economists' understanding of freedom, because their concept of

freedom mistakenly considers the negative tendencies of human beings, their egoism, as their true essence. In addition, Marx claims that their approach to human nature is both totally ahistorical and excludes the social-political situation in which man shapes his true nature. Thus, he rejects classical political economists' assumption of human nature throughout his works. By criticizing the negative and abstract liberal understanding of human beings, Marx refuses the dualistic distinction between individuals as isolated atoms and a society as just arithmetic aggregate of parts. In addition, unlike Hobbes' presumption of the nature state of human beings, i.e., a war of all against all, Marx posits that human beings could build positive and co-operative relationships with others to live together as species-beings. Marx tries to justify this claim with aid of socio-anthropological understanding of human beings. He says that because the individual is the social being, the expression of his life, thus, is an expression and statement of his social life. For him, as human beings are essentially social beings, they can achieve their freedom by positively developing their concrete social relations.

Secondly, Marx dismisses classical political economists' ahistorical explanation of freedom. He explains that bourgeois ideals such as freedom, equality, and property do not generate from the natural phenomenon common to all societies, but from the forms of economic life based on capitalistic modes of production.

To Marx the reconciliation between individual freedom and communal freedom can be accomplished through the abolition of private property on the one hand and the communistic regulation of production on the other hand. For this, the process of material production should be managed by freely associated men, and stands under their conscious and planned control.

Therefore, for Marx, the concept of freedom cannot be achieved through isolated man's calculation of his interests, but gained through the community where each individual has the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions. In comparison with classical economists' concept of freedom which consists in the maximal absence of restraints on the individuals' choices for increase of their interests Marx's concept of freedom lies in individuals' collective use of rationality (reason) that can develop their concrete social relations as a proper sphere of realization of human freedom.

3.5 Freedom: Negative and Positive

Isaiah Berlin introduces a distinction between negative and positive liberty by saying that each interpretation answers a different question. Liberty in the negative sense is specified by answering the question: What is the area within which the subject is able to do without interference by other persons? Liberty in the positive sense is specified by answering the question: What or who is the source of interference that can determine someone to do this rather than that? So negative liberty is about freedom from interference and positive liberty is being in control or able to do something.

Negative and positive liberty is not merely two distinct kinds of liberty; they can be seen as rival, incompatible interpretations of a single political ideal. Since few people claim to be against liberty, the way this term is interpreted and defined can have important political implications. Political liberalism tends to presuppose a negative definition of liberty: liberals generally claim that if one favours individual liberty one should place strong limitations on the activities of the state. Critics of liberalism often contest this implication by contesting the negative definition of liberty: they argue that the pursuit of liberty understood as self-realization or as self-determination —whether of the individual or of the collectivity— can require state intervention of a kind not normally allowed by liberals.

Negative freedom rests on two axioms:

1. Each one knows one's interests best. This is based on the assumption of the individual as a rational agent with a capacity to deliberate and to make an informed choice.
2. The State has a limited role to play. With the individual agency foregrounded, the State cannot decide ends and purposes for the individual.

In the writings of John Locke and in recent days in the writings of Friedrich Hayek and Robert Nozick, the fullest expression of negative liberty can be found.

In its political form, positive freedom has often been thought of as necessarily achieved through a collectivity. Perhaps the clearest case is that of Rousseau's theory of freedom, according to which individual freedom is achieved through participation in the process whereby one's community exercises collective control over its own affairs in accordance with the 'general will'. Put in the simplest terms, one might say that a democratic society is a free society because it is a self-determined society, and that a member of that society is free to the extent that he or she participates in its democratic process. But there are also individualist applications of the concept of positive freedom. For example, it is sometimes said that a government should aim actively to create the conditions necessary for individuals to be self-sufficient or to achieve self-realization. The negative concept of freedom, on the other hand, is most commonly assumed in liberal defences of the constitutional liberties typical of liberal-democratic societies, such as freedom of movement, freedom of religion, and freedom of speech, and in arguments against paternalist or moralist state intervention. It is also often invoked in defences of the right to private property, although some have contested the claim that private property necessarily enhances negative liberty.

Many liberals, have suggested that the positive concept of liberty carries with it a danger of authoritarianism. Consider the fate of a permanent and oppressed minority. Because the members of this minority participate in a democratic process characterized by majority rule, they might be said to be free on the grounds that they are members of a society exercising self-control over its own affairs. But they are oppressed, and so are surely unfree. Moreover, it is not necessary to see a society as democratic in order to see it as self-controlled; one might instead adopt an organic conception of society, according to which the collectivity is to be thought of as a living organism, and one might believe that this organism will only act rationally, will only be in control of itself, when its various parts are brought into line with some rational plan devised by its wise governors (who, to extend the metaphor, might

be thought of as the organism's brain). In this case, even the majority might be oppressed in the name of liberty.

John Stuart Mill, usually regarded as a defender of negative liberty, compared the growth of an individual to that of a plant. Like a plant, the individual must be allowed to develop his self to the fullest according to his own inner logic. Critics have pointed out that these ideals developed by Mill looks like a positive concept of liberty than a negative one. Positive liberty consists in the growth and development of a free individual who determines and changes his own interests autonomously and from within. This is not just liberty as the mere absence of obstacle but liberty as self-realization.

3.6 Freedom and other Concepts

Freedom or liberty is very much associated with two other concepts: equality and rights. You have studied equality in Unit II of this Module. You will also study rights in the next Unit. A brief description about the relation between freedom and equality and freedom and rights may be presented here.

3.6.1 Freedom and Equality

Freedom or liberty is very much discussed in the tradition of western political philosophy along with equality. But the relation between the two in conflictual or complementary, depending upon how each one is defined. The main reason for which liberty and equality remain conflictual to each other is the fact that the world has limited resources. History has shown us that the two values cannot exist in equal measures. There are times, when liberty was achieved to a great extent but equality was sacrificed, while there are times when equality was achieved to an extent but at the cost of liberty.

There are two factors for which these two values tend to be conflictual. First, liberty and equality conflict with each other when equality is understood as equality of outcomes and liberty is understood as freedom of choice. Equality as equality of outcome has a levelling impact which in the process reduces the freedom of choice by restricting the availability of outcome. Secondly, liberty and equality also tend to be conflictual when either concept is equated with fairness. Recognising a particular situation as a fair situation is, however, very subjective. An apparent inequality may be considered by one as fair if there is adequate freedom and vice versa. But it is difficult to view a situation when both are adequately fair.

John Rawls attempted to reconcile these two values by creating a fair situation in the 'original position' under 'veil of ignorance'. The principal purpose was as much to secure the inviolability of liberty as welfarist and of equality through redistributive ideals.

A complementary relation between liberty and equality also depends on how they are defined. Equality accompanies the value of liberty in the views of many thinkers. To Locke, natural rights including liberty are regulated by natural law characterised by equality. To Rawls, any method of redistribution of liberties has to conform to the laws of equality.

3.6.2 Freedom and Rights

The western political tradition during the 17th and 18th centuries equated the concept of liberty with that of freedom. In fact some modern theorists like Nozick also believed so like the earlier tradition of Hobbes and Locke. In fact, the libertarian tradition does not find any difference between freedom and rights. However, more recently, a school of theorists like Holmes and Lamont argue that liberty cannot be equated with right as right is a liberty in the restricted sense— a liberty protected and recognized by law.

This school argues that liberty differs from rights on two counts:

First, there can only be a right to something, whereas freedom can be freedom to, as well as freedom from. Secondly, there are degrees of freedom but not of rights.

3.7 Conclusion

In this Unit, you have learnt that the meaning of freedom is not easy to define. There have been diverse views on the meaning and connotation of freedom depending upon their political affiliation. Left wing political philosophy generally couples the notion of freedom with that of positive liberty, or the enabling of a group or individual to determine their own life or realize their own potential. Freedom, in this sense, may include freedom from poverty, starvation, treatable disease, and oppression, as well as freedom from force and coercion, from whomever they may issue. The right wing political philosophers, on the contrary, consider freedom as negative liberty which includes freedom from restraints and obstacles. Isaiah Berlin has developed these two notions of liberty as positive and negative in some of his lectures and books.

The notion of freedom has, however, come into the tradition of western political philosophy with the onset of modernity. There have been two distinct traditions in the classical liberal school: the contractarian and the utilitarian, while the Marxian tradition totally opposes this view and gives a more positive notion of freedom. This freedom or liberty is academically discussed with two other important and related values, namely, equality (which you have studied in the earlier Unit) and rights (which you will study in the next Unit). You have learnt from this Unit the relation between these values as well.

3.8 Points to Remember

After reading this Unit, you should remember the following points:

- Although we use the word freedom very often in our vocabulary, the meaning is diverse.
- Freedom of the individual is a value that we all cherish, but it has evolved in the modern age with the rise of democratic societies.
- Freedom finds a very important place in the tradition of liberalism, where it has

been analysed in a particular manner by the contractarians and in a different way by the utilitarians.

- Within the contractarian traditions also, the views of Hobbes and Locke resemble a trend which normally goes with the negative aspect of freedom, while Rousseau argues in a manner which goes with the positive aspect of freedom.
- John Stuart Mill, an exponent of qualified utilitarianism defines freedom in a different manner.
- The Marxian tradition is completely different from these and talks about something which enables individuals to enjoy real freedom.

On the basis of these different notions of freedom, Isaiah Berlin categorized freedom into negative liberty and positive liberty.

- Liberty has a conflictual as well as a complementary relation with equality depending upon how one defines the two terms.

3.9 Sample Questions

Long Questions

1. Examine the contractarian idea of freedom. Do you think that Rousseau's idea of freedom radically differs from others of this school? Argue your case.
2. Examine the Marxian understanding of freedom.
3. Discuss Isaiah Berlin's categorization of freedom.

Medium Questions

1. Analyse Locke's concept of freedom.
2. What are the basic premises upon which negative freedom is based?
3. Do you think liberty and equality are in conflict with each other? Discuss fully.

Short Questions

1. Discuss, in brief, the meaning of freedom.
2. Mention the differences between liberty and rights.

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Unit 4 ❐ Rights

Structure

4.1 Objectives

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

1. What one means by right
2. What the different kinds of rights are
3. What we mean by first-generation rights
4. Which rights constitute second generation rights
5. How group rights and minority rights have evolved
6. What is meant by human rights

4.2 Introduction

The vocabulary of political philosophy and political movements are using the term rights since the 17th century, emphatically since 18th century, with a major shift in the meaning since the late 19th and early 20th century and with a completely different vigour since the late 20th century.

Since the days of the Glorious revolution of England in 1688, the idea of rights of the common people was beginning to emerge. It really came into the forefront when the founders

of the United States stated in the Declaration of Independence in 1776 that certain rights were inalienable. A few years later, following the French Revolution a Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen was passed by France's Constituent Assembly in 1789. Since then rights have become very important not only in political philosophy and political theory, but in actual life of mankind. It has however undergone many changes, the most important change and shift was perhaps brought about in the early 20th century by the socialist revolutions. The civil rights movement in USA during the 1960s and later imported throughout the world have made rights as the cornerstone upon which our societies are now rebuilt. In recent years, rights of women and other vulnerable groups have become matters of debate. Human rights have now become an umbrella term within which all kinds of rights like right to have choice over sexuality, or even the right to die has been incorporated. The language of rights has become the most powerful language for moral change in the 20th and 21st centuries.

4.3 Meaning and Idea of Rights

You may very well ask the question: what is a right? What is meant by a right? Simply speaking, right is to get one's due. To have a right is to be entitled to do something or to have something done, for example to vote, to speak, to associate. It is different from obligation as you are not obliged to exercise your right. For instance, you have the right to vote but it is not obligatory on your part to exercise your voting right.

These rights can be perceived from different perspectives. Some of them may be discussed:

4.3.1 Natural Rights and Legal Rights

Natural rights are rights which are "natural" in the sense of "not artificial, not man-made", as in rights deriving from human nature . They are universal; that is, they apply to all people, and do not derive from the laws of any specific society. They exist necessarily, inhere in every individual, and cannot be taken away. For example, it has been argued that humans have a natural right to life. They are also called moral rights or inalienable rights.

Legal rights, in contrast, are based on a society's customs, laws, statues or actions by legislatures. An example of a legal right is the right to vote of citizens. Legal rights are sometimes called statutory rights and are not considered to be universal. On the contrary, they are culturally and politically determined and hence relative since they depend on a specific societal context to have meaning.

4.3.2 Claim Rights and Liberty Rights

A **claim right** is a right which entails that another person has a duty to the right-holder. Somebody else must do or refrain from doing something to or for the claim holder, such as perform a service or supply a product for him or her; that is, he or she has a claim to that service or product. For example, many jurisdictions recognize broad claim rights to

things like "life, liberty, and property"; these rights impose an obligation upon others not to assault or restrain a person, or use their property, without the claim-holder's permission.

A **liberty right** in contrast, is simply a freedom or permission for the right-holder to do something, and there are no obligations on other parties to do or not do anything. For example, if a person has a legal liberty of right to free speech, that merely means that it is not legally forbidden for them to speak freely: it does not mean that anyone has to help enable their speech, or to listen to their speech.

4.3.3 Positive Rights and Negative Rights

In one sense, a right is a permission to do something or an entitlement to a specific service or treatment, and these rights have been called **positive rights.** However, in another sense, rights may allow or require inaction, and these are called **negative rights**; they permit or require doing nothing. Thus, positive rights are permissions to do things, or entitlements to be done unto. One example of a positive right is the purported "right to welfare." Negative rights are permissions not to do things, or entitlements to be left alone. Often the distinction is invoked by libertarians who think of a negative right as an entitlement to non-interference such as a right against being assaulted. Though similarly named, positive and negative rights should not be confused with active rights (which encompass "privileges" and "powers") and passive rights (which encompass "claims" and "immunities").

4.3.4 Individual Rights and Group Rights

Individual rights are rights held by individual people regardless of their group membership or lack thereof.

Group rights have been argued to exist when a group is seen as more than a mere composite or assembly of separate individuals but an entity in its own right. In other words, it is possible to see a group as a distinct being in and of itself; it is akin to an enlarged individual, a corporate body, which has a distinct will and power of action and can be thought of as having rights. For example, members of the scheduled caste community of India have a right to reservation of seats in educational institutions funded by government.

4.4 Evolution of the Concept of Rights

Rights like equality and freedom have evolved in the modern age. They are very much associated with the onset of liberal values, modernity, a democratic political order and a capitalist socio-economic system. Rights are often considered fundamental to civilization, being regarded as established pillars of society and culture and the history of social conflicts can be found in the history of each right and its development. 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.

If we look at the history of the emergence of rights, we find that civil rights were the first to emerge. Equality and Freedom (liberty) were the watchwords of these civil rights.

Political rights were also closely associated and emerged simultaneously. Civil rights include the ensuring of peoples' physical and mental integrity, life and safety; protection from discrimination on grounds such as race, gender, colour, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, or disability; and individual rights such as privacy, the freedom of thought and conscience, speech and expression, religion, press, assembly and movement.

Political rights include natural justice (procedural fairness) in law, such as the rights of the accused, including the right to a fair trial; due proceeds; the right to seek redress or a legal remedy; and rights of participation in civil society and politics such as freedom of association, the right to assemble, the right to petition, the right of self –defence and the right to vote.

It is also to be noted here that the social and political rights that evolved for the protection of individual freedom was principally negative in nature. In other words, individual freedom that is sought to be protected is from infringement by governments, social organizations, and private individuals, and which ensure one's ability to participate in the civil and political life of the society and state without discrimination or repression. As these rights evolved first in the series of emergence of rights, they are called first generation rights.

4.5 Second Generation Rights: Social and Economic

Economic, social and cultural rights are socio-economic human rights, such as the right to education, right to be employed, right to housing, right to adequate standard of living, right to health as well as social security and unemployment benefits. Chronologically, they evolved next to the civil and political rights and therefore are called second generation rights. Second-generation human rights are related to equality and began to be recognized by governments after World War II. They are fundamentally economic and social in nature. They guarantee different members of the citizenry equal conditions and treatment. They impose upon the government the duty to respect and promote and fulfill 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 in the realisation of these rights acts in a positive way. In other words, these rights help in the realization of the self and the fulfilment of the individuality. Hence, these rights sometimes are referred to as positive rights.

4.6 Third Generation Rights: Group Rights and Minority Rights

Third generation rights are the last to evolve and hence are called so. These rights go beyond civil and political; and social and economic rights and are not confined to the boundaries of nation-states only but are to be enjoyed by humans simply because they are

human beings. These rights have not found place in many of the International Covenants; nor in most of the Constitutions of the world. However, they are very significant and prominent in recent years. Interestingly, while the first and second generation rights are mostly individualistic in nature, the third generation rights are mostly of groups— either marginalized, vulnerable or minority ones.

Group rights have evolved with the rise of the notion of multiculturalism. One of the major problems in the contemporary period is the problem of reconciling the aspirations of political equality with the fact of social and cultural difference within liberal democratic societies. The defenders and proponents of group rights argue that these rights for ethnic/ cultural/religious minorities need to promote 'genuine equality' as this system could alone secure real equality as against the idea of universal citizenship based on the concept of equality perceived as 'difference blindness'.

Although multiculturalism has raised important questions about the unequal status of minorities within the nation-state, there are problems also associated with it. For instance, many argue that it may lead to cessationist movements within a nation-state like what we have noticed in Kashmir in India. As Bhikhu Parekh, a noted political theorist, argues that in multicultural societies, cultural communities generally demand various kinds of rights they think they need to maintain their collective identity. Some of these rights, usually called group, collective or communal are not easy to accommodate within liberal jurisprudence and raise difficult questions such as whether the concept of collective rights is logically coherent and what kind of collectivities may legitimately claim what kind of rights.

4.7 Human Rights

Human rights are moral principles or norms that describe certain standards of human behaviour, and are regularly protected as legal rights in national and international law. They are commonly understood as inalienable fundamental rights to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being. These rights are inherent in all human beings regardless of their nation, location, language, religion, ethnic origin or any other status. They are applicable everywhere and at every time in the sense of being universal, and they are egalitarian in the sense of being the same for everyone. Thus they transcend the limitations of time and space.

The doctrines of human rights are highly influential today and have been able to put limits on the actions and activities of the governments. In fact, the holocaust following the World War II prompted human rights movement throughout the world and one of the most important doctrines of Human Rights called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) were adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. Following this December 10 is being celebrated as the Human Rights Day. The UDHR is the most translated document and consists of 30 articles, which have been subsequently elaborated in international treaties, national constitutions and laws. Civil and political rights, that is the first generation

rights mentioned above, are enshrined in articles 3 to 21 of the UDHR and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Economic, social and cultural rights are enshrined in articles 22 to 28 of the UDHR and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). There have been four Conventions to human rights internationally and those are

- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Thus, it can easily be understood that not only the first and second generation rights but rights for certain groups, which are regarded as disadvantaged and vulnerable everywhere, have also been mentioned in the Conventions.

The United Nations designated 1968 as the International Year for Human Rights to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and convened an International Conference on Human Rights in Tehran, Iran, to enhance national and international human rights efforts and initiatives. Twenty-five years later, the World Conference on Human Rights, convened in Vienna in 1993, reassessed the progress of United Nations human rights work over the years.

4.8 Conclusion

In this Unit, you have learnt that rights are in fact complementary to the two other important concepts that you have studied in Unit II and III, namely, equality and freedom respectively. Rights are also the products of the modern age and have started to evolve with the rise of liberal values, democratic politics and capitalist economy. The civil and the political rights were the first to evolve, for which they were called first generation rights, while the social and the economic were the second generation rights. An important aspect behind the rise of these rights is the belief in individualism and considering each individual as equal to others. The third generation rights are very recent origin and in a way challenge the basic proposition of the earlier two generation of rights, that is they claim rights for the disadvantaged and minority groups. In recent years, the notion of human rights has perhaps become the most significant and talked-about idea, which were present no doubt from the very beginning of the emergence of rights but have been codified and documented most comprehensively by the United Nations system following the World War II.

4.9 Points to Remember

After reading this Unit, you should remember the following points:

- Rights, equality and freedom create a triad, the absence of one makes the others irrelevant.
- All three are the products of the modern age— associated with the rise of liberal political philosophy, democratic political system and capitalist economic system.
- Rights can be classified according to their nature into natural rights and legal rights; claim rights and liberty rights; positive rights and negative rights; and individual rights and group rights.
- From the perspective of evolution of rights, they can be classified into first generation, second generation and third generation rights.
- While the emphasis on the first two generations is individual, the third generation rights talks about groups.
- Human rights have become very important aspects of rights today.

4.10 Sample Questions

Long Questions

1. Examine different kinds of rights.
2. Distinguish between first generation and second generation rights.
3. Write a note on Human Rights.

Medium Questions

1. Analyse group rights.
2. Make a distinction between positive and negative rights.
3. Mention how human rights have been codified under the UN system.

Short Questions

1. What is meant by a right?
2. Briefly discuss liberty right.
3. What are political rights?

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Unit 1 □ Classical Democracy

Structure

1.1 Objectives

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

(a) Introduction, where the students will be made familiar with an overview of classical democracy.

(b) Democracy in the 17th century.

(c) Democracy in the 18th century.

(d) Democracy in the 19th century.

1.2 Introduction

In terms of its arrival democracy in the classical sense is as old as the ancient Greeks in 5th century B.C. The kind of direct democracy that flourished and was institutionalized in the ancient city state of Athens hardly received any acclamation in the intellectual tradition of Socrates-Plato-Aristotle. Plato viewed democracy as a system of mob rule at the expense of wisdom and property. Aristotle also condemned democracy as a perverted or degenerated form of "rule by many". Nevertheless ancient Athenian democracy is frequently cited in political literature as the earliest manifestation of classical democracy, its focus being on the participatory character of democracy.

Barring the long period of Middle Ages in Europe the idea of democracy was revived in a new context in the 17th century during the time of the Puritan Revolution in the 1640s and viewed in this perspective democracy has grown, both as political philosophy and as a real world political activity, only during the last four hundred years. The two thousand five hundred years' history of political thought may not thus be equated with the history of democratic thinking inter alia.

For the modern writer, pre-modern or pre-renaissance phase of democratic practice remains confined to the ancient Athenian city-state. But Athenian democracy was a system of politics for the participating citizens only. And the citizens constituted at best one-third of the total population of Athens at that time, because about 2/3rds of the population, composed of metics (outsiders) and slaves, were excluded from the right to citizenship. If democracy means rule of the people, by the people, then ancient Athenian democracy was not truly people's rule as it excluded a big section of the people from all kinds of political participation. Slavery being the ruling socio-economic formation in ancient Greece one may not, however, minimise the achievements of the Athenians. For, Athens had experienced monarchy, aristocracy, rule of the wealthy (Plutocracy) and oligarchy before arriving at the democratic stage. So even if it was a truncated form of democracy, it was something of an achievement on the part of the Athenian citizens. That is why western writers on political thought point out that despite all its limitations the democratic republic which the Athenians created was the "historical forerunner of all subsequent democracies in the western world." As democracy flowered in Athens, its citizens enjoyed a free atmosphere of public discussion and lively debate on various domestic and foreign policy questions as well as on institutions and personalities. And this deliberative character constitutes the essence of democracy. While rule of the many or majority rule provides the basic structural principle of democracy, the presence of a free, open, social-political milieu constitutes the essential spirit of democracy. Athenian democracy was basically slave democracy. Will Durant was probably right when he characterized Athenian democracy as "the narrowest and fullest in history; narrowest in number of those who share its privileges, fullest in the directness and equality with which all the citizens control legislation and administer public affairs."

It is said that in between ancient Athenian democracy and modern democracies there emerged some kind of democracy in the 'free' communes in the urban republic of medieval Italy, France, Germany and the low countries (i.e. Holland and Belgium). As Quentin Skinner informs us, "By the middle of the thirteenth century, many leading communes of Lombardy and Tuscany had ...acquired the status of independent city-states with written constitutions guaranteeing their elective and self-governing arrangements." Skinner also argues that the example of these Italian city republics continued to serve as an inspiration to the later enemies of tyranny and absolutism. He has, of course, warned that it would be too simplistic an attempt to trace a line of descent from the political arrangements of the city-republics to those of modern democratic states. The experiments in self-government in the Italian city-republics were shortlived. Moreover, most of them suffered from endemic civic strife. The medieval communes may not be viewed as the precursors of modern democracies. But they may very well be treated as a bridge between the Greek republics and the modern parliamentary democracies. The feature of the medieval city republics was that they rested on the higher socio-economic pedestal of the merchant and craft guilds. While these communes were cut off from and often hostile to the mass of peasants around them, they were not dependent on slavery. This transitional form of democracy was superseded by the post-renaissance republics and democracies. As George Novack rightly pointed out,

the distinctiveness of modern democracies lies in their wider scope. Thus, the modern (bourgeois) democracies are neither limited to a small section of population (as in the ancient Athens), nor are they restricted to urban areas only (as in medieval city republics): they are "national in scope and...based upon international competitive...conditions rather than on local monopolies."

Finally, let it be noted that the concept of democracy became an important part of political discourse in the west only after William of Moerbeke translated Aristotle's *Politics* into Latin. Moerbeke used the word 'Democratia' to translate the expression 'The rule of the people'. The time was the end of the thirteenth century. If the city-republics at that time were not democracies in the true sense (owing to their limited scope) they, no doubt, made one great contribution to the development of democratic theory as they emphasized the principle of election. Thus the medieval communes required that all political offices should be elective. It is true that the right to vote was restricted to males and taxpayers; but within these limits, writes Skinner, the principle of election was widely respected. And the most important theorist at that time to advocate the democratic principle was Marsillus of Padua. In his celebrated treatise, *The Defender of Peace* (1324 AD), Marsillus argued forcefully that by the method of election alone one can obtain the best ruler and get justice.

1.3 Democracy : 17th centuty

The overwhelming esteem that democracy receives everywhere in the world today is essentially a product of political thinking and political practice in the second half of the twentieth century. However, these modern processes of democratic thinking and activity can be traced back to certain revolutionary events in the 17th and 18th centuries and to certain classical writings during the period. It can be said that despite the wishes of the New Right or the assertion of neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism, the democratic heritage is gaining prestige everywhere among all sorts of groups and peoples. The socialists and the liberals alike now swear by democracy. Every system is eager to demonstrate its democratic credentials, democracy being the only system based on the principle of government by the people. What is more, the principle of political equality and the widest distribution of political power characterize democracy.

The question is : can modern democracies emulate the ancient Athenian practice of direct political participation by the citizens? The answer is clearly in the negative—even the elements of direct democracy like referendum or mass meeting are very rarely found to be viable in terms of practical operation. Today people govern themselves, not by participating directly in the decision making process but, by sending (electing) their representatives, who would act as decision-makers. So, today political participation of the people essentially means participation in the act of voting. Hence democracy also means representative democracy. And it was in the mid 17th century that the notion of representative government was presented for the first time in Britain.

The Puritan revolution in the 1640s may be viewed as the cradle of modern representative democracy and the militant political group called levellers in that English civil war may be given the credit of being the first modern democrats. Writing on the Levellers, David Wootton observes, "The Levellers are the first modern political movement organized around the idea of popular sovereignty. They are the first democrats who think in terms, not of participatory self-government within a city-state but of representative government within a nation-state."

Democracy was thus a revolutionary product. It was launched by the radicals, by the revolutionaries like the levellers. It is important to note here the revolutionary antecedents of democracy. This will remove the wrong notion, often encouraged by some writers, that revolutionary acts are always antithetical to democracy. In his book *Democracy and Revolution* George Novack has argued that at least six great social and political upheavals marked the decisive steps in the development of capitalism and democracy in the west. The first in that order was the Dutch revolution of the late 16th century by which the Netherlands won its independence and set up its republic. The second great upheaval, according to Novack, was the English revolutionary movements (the Puritan revolution and the Glorious Revolution) of the 17th century. These revolutions secured the supremacy of the rising middle classes and their parliament. The third and fourth were the American revolt (1776) and the French revolution (1789) respectively. The fifth was the relatively weak revolt of February 1848 in Europe and the sixth was the very significant people's movement in America leading to the American civil war (1861).

The English revolution in the 1640s began with an attack on monarchy and the church. The civil war, writes Novack, was precipitated by the refusal of Charles I to surrender his authority over the army to parliament and abandon the church of England to Puritan rule. The whole of England was shaken up by intensified civil strife which ultimately brought the common people together in a revolutionary democratic formation called the levellers. The levellers were the true representatives of the masses, the commoners, and they fought for a programme of radical democracy. There was, however, another group at the farthest left composed of dispossessed peasants, called 'Diggers', who claimed themselves as the 'True levellers'. The levellers maintained that parliament should be subordinate to the people and they favoured a very broad franchise. Their democratic assertion was best formulated by colonel Rainborough who said "...I think that the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live, as the greatest he..." The leveller movement produced various demands that became part of the heritage of modern democracies. Thus they called for a sweeping democratization of both the church and the state and they demanded annual election of parliament responsible to the people. Above all, they proposed a constitutional republic where the people would enjoy complete freedom of the press. Among the prominent champions of the leveller movement were John Lilburne, Richard Overton and William Walwyn. The radical democratic movement of the levellers lasted only for four years and yet during this brief span they could create such an impact that when, in later years, men like Harrington or William Pethy were talking about democracy they were actually repeating the political proposals of the levellers.

C.B. Macpherson would not like to view the levellers as democrats, his argument being based on the fact that the levellers did not use the word 'democracy' in their demands and that the levellers advocated a very limited franchise. However, on the basis of his study of the history of levellers' movement David Wootton rejects Macpherson's view and argues that the main arguments of the levellers were not only democratic but were also strikingly secular. Thus the leveller leader Richard Overton dismissed the claims made by the Independents to divine inspiration as unacceptable. The problem with the levellers was that they did not constitute a political party. They did not fight elections and they had no notion of government based on party rule. In that sense they were advocating representative government without having the least idea of how, in practice, a representative government may be run. It may be more appropriate to argue that the claim of the levellers as the founding fathers lies not so much in their notion of representative government but in their demand for freedom—individual freedom as well as freedom of the press. The importance of freedom of the press was also highlighted by another great poet of the age, John Milton in his book *Areopagitica* written in 1644.

Let it be noted that the demand for democracy in the 17th century got intimately connected with individualism and liberalism. Thus the levellers themselves were very much individualistic. They believed that everyone should have the right to work, worship, practice freedom of conscience, choose government, speak freely, publish and petition. They also advocated the right to own and dispose of private property. Gettell observes that during the Puritan Revolution Milton emerged as the first prophet of individualism in England. Milton not only defended the right of free expression as a privilege of citizenship but also proceeded to defend liberty in general, arguing that it is essential to the dignity of man and to the development of his faculties of reason. Even Hobbes, the great defender of absolutism during this period, advocated the individualistic notion that all men are naturally equal and that a large degree of individual freedom is desirable in every socio-political order.

Seventeenth century democracy was also closely connected with a notion of liberalism despite the advocacy of royal absolutism by Hobbes and Filmer. The central elements of liberal outlook were crystallized in John Locke's *Second Treatise on Civil Government* during the period of Whig ascendency at the time of the Glorious Revolution (1688) in England. Locke's conception of civil society was the society of freemen, equal under the rule of law, bound together by no common purpose but sharing a respect for each others' rights. Locke particularly emphasized the link between right to personal property and individual liberty. He had a clear perception that personal independence presupposes private property securely protected under the rule of law. As John Gray points out, after Locke the claim that civil society demands the widespread diffusion of personal property, becomes a staple theme of liberal democracy.

1.4 Democracy: 18th century

The Eighteenth century in Europe is known as the century of revolutions. One may

particularly refer to the second half of the 18th century—a period characterised by certain earthshaking events that not only shaped the modern western civilization but also laid the foundation of modern democratic culture. According to Robert R. Palmer, the four decades from 1760 to 1800 constitute the age of democratic revolution. Apart from the American Revolution (1776) and the French revolution (1789) the Industrial Revolution (from 1760 onwards) also contributed positively to the development of modern western democracies.

The strength of democratic ideology is intimately connected with the Industrial Revolution. Revolutionary changes and developments in science and technology on the one hand and revolutionary changes in the system of production (for example, introduction of factory system leading to large scale production) on the other would mean increasing involvement of the masses. While these developments bring greater amenities for larger number of people, they also empower men to fight disease and starvation on the one hand and ruthless exploitation on the other. In other words, Industrial Revolution would bring meanigful, far-reaching, changes affecting significantly large number of men and women. Moreover, various innovations and inventors made it not only necessary but also possible to mobilise the power of the masses in support of revolutionary action. The Industrial Revolution led to unprecedented increase in the case and scope of public communication that is so essential for the development of democracy. By bringing rapid changes in the economic and social conditions, Industrial Revolution would indirectly destroy many of the local and class differences that had long stood as barriers between men. Such barriers and inequalities were obstacles to democracy. So Industrial Revolution made it possible to allow growing mass participation in politics. The democratic principle of legitimacy came to be emphasized more and more and gradually decisive and effective leadership also emerged from the masses.

Industrial revolution was a continuous and cumulative process that got associated with the breakdown of old ways, the ways of the feudal societies. The spread of invention and machinery increased the opportunities of improvement and liberation of the masses. The ancient relations of hierarchy got disrupted and new classes of owners (of the means of production) emerged to dominate the economy and the polity. To use the Marxist terminology Industrial Revolution prepared the road towards the establishment of bourgeois hegemony, and the bourgeoisie or the new classes would announce democracy as their ideology and proclaim liberty and equality as their formidable political slogans.

Democratic movement began in England's colonies on the other side of the Atlantic. The American War of Independence (1776) can be viewed as the first victorious colonial revolt in modern times. After the victory the makers of United States of America went on to unify the people in a federated democratic republic. Representative governments were set up in most of the federated units and despite certain limitations, franchise was extended in several areas. At that point of time in the late 18th century the USA no doubt emerged as the most democratic system in the world.

The American Revolution stimulated the wars of independence of the Latin American (South American continent in particular) people against Spanish domination. And in USA

the revolution created a democracy that brought common people into the affairs of government not just as voters but as rulers too. The Americans would now have a "government of all over all" in which the ruled could become the rulers and the rulers may turn into "ruled". Gordon S Wood writes, "By extending representation through all party of their governments Americans were able to justify their new federal system with its multiplicity of officials at both the state and national level: all were now agents, limited agents of the people..." And G.S Wood adds, "The people ruled everywhere, or, from a different perspective, they ruled nowhere. ...Americans now told themselves that no people before them, not even the British, had ever understood the principle of representation as they had." Long ago Madison also wrote in the *Federalist*, "Representation was the pivot on which the whole American system of government moved". The Americans also showed that government would be run not by a leisure class but by men who also work hard to earn a living, so in the new notion of democracy in the late 18th century the emphasis on the leadership of a leisured landed gentry is lost.

In the development of democratic theory and practice the contribution of French revolution (1789) is immense. Democracy could not flourish in the feudal order and the French revolution put an end to the old order (the ancient regime). The revolution simpley routed the three main bulwarks of the old regime—the monarchy, the church and the feudal aristocracy. So it broke the back of European feudalism and thereby prepared the road for a democratic order. The Marxists view the French revolution as the "bourgeois revolution" par excellence. The various events of the revolution from 1789 to 1799 like the role of the conservative Girondists in the Assembly and the Convention, the attack on the Girondists by the sans culottes of Paris, the Jacobin dictatorship, the Thermidor reaction etc. may not make it easy to show the link between revolution and democracy. But then, the contribution of this epochal phenomenon of 1789 is to be appreciated in terms of the social and political message it communicated to the civilized world. For example, as the great historian of the revolution Georges Lefebvre tells us that the essential work of the Revolution of 1789 may be found registered in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizens. In terms of democratic practice creation of a new agency for law and order may be cited as an example. As George Novack writes, "The revitalized and democratized French army was the most formidable and enduring creation" of the revolution during the Jacobin republic. The guillotine that beheaded Robespierre and his followers no doubt shot the flowering of revolutionary democracy in the French Revolution. But the message of the revolution was not lost. Slowly but steadily the 'demos', the masses, in different countries would acquire their natural leader. In France itself it was Gracchus Babeuf who advocated a communist solution for the problems of the poor and made an abortive attempt to seize power in 1796. Babeuf proposed to realise equality and thereby secure real democracy. It can be said that even though the democratic phase of the French Revolution was short lived, the revolution had its great success in popularizing the notion of the sovereignty of the people."

Among the 18th century thinkers one may refer to persons as different as Montesquieu, Rousseau or Bentham all of whom in one way or another would emphasize the significance

of democracy. In his famous work *The Spirit of Laws* Montesquieu would appear as a political sociologist to indicate relations between principles of social order and forms of government. Thus, according to him, despotism is connected with fear and monarchy as related to the principle of honour. When the principle of virtue is dominant in society, the political system will be of a democratic and republican character. To make the democratic government best placed for individual freedom Montesquieu further suggested separation of powers between the three organs of government—such separation ensuring essential safeguard against tyranny.

Rousseau, even though he died eleven years before the 1789 revolution, is known to have inspired the revolutionaries by his writings. Direct democracy and equality were his ideals. His notion of General Will corresponds to the common interest of all members of the community (real wills of all members producing General Will) and this common interest, he believed, could not be served by any representative government. Rousseau did not approve the British system of parliamentary democracy. True and legitimate authority arrives only under the sovereignty of the General Will. One cannot miss the essentially democratic character of his thought in so far as Rousseau suggested periodic assemblies of the sovereign people so that the people can assert the supremacy of their common interest or General Will.

Jeremy Bentham, the father of English utilitarian philosophy, was also at heart a liberal democrat. Even while he was propagating the calculus of pain and pleasure he did not forget the basic democratic principle of the welfare of the majority (thus he propagated the principle of the greatest good of the greatest number) and the equally significant democratic principle of social and political equality. Thus he revealed a more advanced and progressive attitude (than his disciple John Stuart Mill) of a democrat when he asserted that in the political system "Everybody should count as one and nobody should come as more than one." The state, according to Bentham, is a trustee for the individual and this state is a democratic state. And the Benthamite state is a state in which all men have equal rights. All must be equal before the law. Bentham's democratic conviction was clearly based on egalitatian principles. He recognised that a society which is without gross inequalities of fortune is happier than one which is not.

Elements of individualism were strongly associated with the 18th century notion of democracy. Let it be as well noted that the second half of the 18th century is also characterized as the period of Enlightenment. And one of the important features of the Enlightenment is individual freedom and rational consideration of the problems of the individual and society. Thus, even an idealist philosopher like Kant declared that the individual be treated always as an 'end' and never merely as a 'means'.

1.5 Democracy: 19th century

Real world democracy recognises majority principle only. Rule of the people may in practice be taken to mean the rule of the majority. In the 19th century this theory (and

practice) of according priority to the will of the majority was a point of debate.

Assertion of the 'sovereignty of the people' was a spectacular achievement of 18th century democratic thinking. Such assertion may be found both in the writings of Rousseau and in the demands of the Jacobins. From this assertion developed the pure idea of democracy as the government of the whole people and by the whole people equally represented. But, as the 19th century thinkers would point out, democracy that is commonly practised is the government of the whole people by a mere majority of the people, exclusively represented. According to John Stuart Mill, the great 19th century English liberal thinker, this majority imposition is false dependency. Alexis de Tocqueville, the great French thinker, anticipated Mill as he expressed his concern about the tyranny of the majority. These thinkers were afraid of Majoritarianism.

Majoritarianism implies a kind of insensitivity towards minorities and individuals, as it is a case of degeneration of democracy when the will of the majority or numerically strongest overrides the will of the minority. So Mill viewed the democracy of numbers as false democracy. Such democracy may be the prelude to a new kind of slavery. The problem with Mill was that he was primarily a liberal individualist thinker. He considered representative democracy as ideally the best only because there is no other better alternative. But he would hasten to add that even if it is ideally the best, it is not applicable everywhere. And the conditions that Mill prescribed would make it very difficult, often impossible, for many countries to fulfil.

Mill argued that before a community opts for a government of its choice it must fulfil three conditions: (a) whether the people are willing and able to understand what that government is; (b) whether the people are willing and able to understand promises of the government and (c) whether people are willing and able to protect the government from all dangers. And when democracy is the choice Mill would add a host of other conditions. Even in modern India (where a large number of men and women suffer from poverty and illiteracy) Mill's conditions will make democracy an impossible dream. Mill was very sceptical about the ways of the masses. He was basically an elitist. He did not advocate the principle of "one man one vote". He advocated plural voting. It is a contradiction in Mill that, while he was far advanced during his time in so far as he could strongly advocate 'women's suffrage', he was also far behind his teacher Bentham as he prescribed weightage voting.

Mill's concern for the right of the minorities is, of course, democratic enough. He argued rightly that if the majority has "the right to rule", the minority must enjoy "the right to be heard". From this standpoint his prescriptions for the protection of minority voice and interests can be appreciated. Mill believed that the quality of representative assemblies would be high if intelligent minorities are enabled to combine their votes under a system of proportional representation.

Alexis de Tocqueville emphasized participation as the hallmark of democracy. According to him, 'democratic government' or 'democratic monarchy' (as in UK) can mean only one thing. In the true sense it meant a government where the people more or less participate in their government. Its sense, writes Tocqueville, is intimately bound to the idea of political

liberty. In his book *Democracy in America* Tocqueville follows a sociological approach to the study of democracy. After studying the American political situation in the 1830s he emphasized, what Montesquieu noted a century earlier, the close link between the nature of society and the character of the polity.

Tocqueville viewed democracy as the equalization of conditions. That society is democratic in which there no longer exists distinction of orders and classes in which all the individuals who make up the collectivity are socially equal. There must not be any hereditary difference or conditions. All occupations, all professions, all titles and all honours must be accessible to all, since this equalitarian situation does not prevail in a feudal society, and so feudalism becomes an impossible situation for the development of democracy.

From Montesquieu to Tocqueville the French thinkers of the 18th and 19th centuries have viewed democracy essentially from a sociological standpoint, emphasizing the social base of democracy. Raymond Aron brings out the following meaning of democracy emerging from the writings of this French author : the whole of the social body is sovereign, and participation of all in the choice of rulers and in the exercise of authority is the logical expression of a democratic society, that is, an egalitarian society.

After noting the principal ideas of Mill and Tocqueville we may now take into account the impact of two important political events in the west that contributed indirectly to the development of democratic theory and practice. These events were the revolutions of 1848 and the American Civil War of 1861. From Ireland to Austria, writes George Novack, the uprising of 1848 in Europe uniformly ended in disaster and at the same time these frustrated attempts made possible numerous reforms in the ensuing decades and prepared the way for further advances by the progressive (democratic) forces. Thus the revolution of 1848 led to the abolition of serfdom in Hungary and then in 1863 Czar Alexander II decreed the emancipation of the serfs in Russia. Franchise was extended in England and the Swiss cantons secured national autonomy. The American Civil War was no doubt the greatest (democratic) revolution of the 19th century. The American people fought the civil war to safeguard the existence of democracy and assure its perpetuation. However, the task of winning democracy and self-determination for black Americans was transmitted to the 20th century when black liberation movements gave a new character to western democracy.

Democracy for the ancient Athenians was a system of citizens' self rule. And today another particular model of democratic rule, the modern secular constitutional representative democracy, founded on a market economy, dominates the political life of the modern world. The Athenian system was narrow in its scope. By contrast modern democracies operate in their widest possible areas being based on the principle of social equality. As John Dunn writes, "we have travelled a long way from the Athenian hillside where the people met in assembly week after week to decide what the 'polis' would do." What the "demos" of the modern democracies would do, as Schumpeter said, is to choose between relatively organized teams of candidates to govern.

1.6 Sample questions

Long questions :

1. Trace the evolution of classical democracy from 17th to 18th century.
2. Analyse how classical democracy developed in the 19th century.

Medium questions :

1. Examine the development of classical democracy in the 18th century.
2. Analyse the views of J.S. Mill and Tocqueville on democracy.

Short questions :

1. Why is Athenian democracy regarded as the source of classical democracy in Europe?
2. Discuss, in brief, the contribution of Tocqueville to the development of the idea of democracy in the 19th century.
3. What were the conditions prescribed by Mill for the success of democracy?

1.7 Bibliography

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Unit 2 ❐ Contemporary Democracy

Structure

2.1 Objectives

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

(a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with an overview of contemporary democracy.
(b) Waves of democratization.
(c) Robert Dahl's idea of 20th century democracy.
(d) Models of democracy.

2.2 Introduction

Although the twentieth century has been variously called the century of the common man or the century of the ultimate victory of liberalism and democracy against Fascism and regimentation, the century, however, did not begin with any encouraging note for the democrats. On the contrary, the very second decade of the century witnessed the tragic episode that is, the First World War. Optimists like the American President Woodrow Wilson thought that the War would make the world safe for democracy. However, the war did not hasten the advance of the institutions of liberal democracy. Imperialist and colonialist manoeuvres and machinations on the one hand and the rise of fascism and authoritarian regimes across Europe on the other hand blunted the prospects of democracy in the 20th century. The rise of Hitler in Germany in the 1930s, in particular, led to a sharp retreat of political liberalism and democracy. The eminent historian Eric Hobsbawm has thus characterised the first half of the twentieth century (specifically the period between 1914 and 1945) as "the age of catastrophe", marked by the fall of liberalism.

Wilson's prediction was thus falsified. Rather than making the world safe for democracy the Great War only got repeated within twenty years with greater vehemence aggravating human tragedy on a larger scale. But the formation of the United Nations after World War II, the growing resistance against Fascism, the movement for human rights and democracy

and, above all, the process of decolonization, attended by antiracist, anti-imperialist urges, all these once again raised hope for democracy after World War II.

The third quarter of the twentieth century (that followed the World War II) saw an efflorescence of human genius and creativity on an extraordinary scale. Profound and unprecedented changes in human life were brought about all over the world. The cybernetic revolution and the related breakthrough in information technology extended the rapidity of change to the last quarter of the century. The so-called process of globalization that we are experiencing now is a consequence of the rapid and fundamental economic, social and cultural transformation occurring since the Second Great War. These changes and progressive transformation were obviously conducive to the development of democratic institutions. For example, throughout the second half of the 20th century the new republic of India would function successfully as a democratic parliamentary system supported by a planned economy (of developmental economics).

Historians like Hobsbawm, however, talk about a dilemma regarding the role of the common people in the democracies that came up in the second half of the 20th century. According to Hobsbawm, this was the dilemma of the age when government could be 'of the people' and 'for the people', but could not in any operational sense be 'by the people'..." The representatives of the people, once they get the taste of power, would adopt all means to get elected every time. For this reason they would either please the electorate in all possible ways, make all sorts of promises or would employ any method (even foul and strong-arm tactics) to manipulate the elections. Governments would take an increasing number of decisions by-passing both the electorate and its representative assemblies. In many 'democratic' states various decision-making bodies would be withdrawn from electoral control. Such executive fiat or administrative decision-making would have its cumulative effect on the electorate, the common people being increasingly helpless and powerless. And when corporate capital or financial tycoons join hands with the so-called peoples' leaders in the executive, democracy would appear almost a sham. As George Bernard Shaw wrote long ago in his preface to the play *Apple Cart*, in democracies money would talk, money would broadcast, money would buy everything. So democracy becomes plutocracy. The result is, increasing disillusionment or growing disenchantment among the common people with the idea of democracy.

By the century's end, wrote Hobsbawm, large numbers of citizens were withdrawing from politics, leaving the affairs of the state to the 'political class' (to use the term coined by the Italian Sociologist Geatano Mosca). This political class or elite is a denial of true democratic set up. Elite rule with no real compulsion of accountability to the people (the common man) cannot contribute towards democracy. In the real world of democracy in the twentieth century, wealth, privatization of life and entertainment and consumerism made politics less important and less attractive to the people. In the developed countries also, as Herbert Marcuse noted, consumerism would make society one-dimensional. And in such one-dimensional societies self gratification is what the common individual aims at. Non-state or even non-political institutions become more attractive. In particular, media becomes the more important component of the social and political process than the parties or electoral system.

We cannot thereby conclude that elite manipulation on the one hand and consumerism on the other have all but destroyed democracy in the late 20th century. After all, in the twentieth century the common people entered history as actors on their own collective right. An increasing number of political systems would derive their authority from the common people. Even the authoritarian systems swear by their so-called 'commitment' to the common people. The Islamic fundamentalist states also are in a position to survive and advance on the basis of mass mobilization of the common people against unpopular governments. Even the most ruthless and brutal ruler is aware that a public sense of the regime's legitimacy, a degree of active popular support, the citizens' willing obedience so to say is necessary for the stability and/or survival of the political system. The East European regimes that broke down and gave way to various forms of democratic set up in 1989-90 bear testimony to the significance of people's will. When the 19th century political philosopher T.H. Green declared, "will, not force, is the basis of the state" he was undoubtedly indicating the most important criterion for the democracies in twentieth century and after.

Even before the Englishman Green, the French aristocrat turned democrat Alexis de Tocqueville said that all history tended towards the destruction of aristocracies and that there would be no long term societal barrier to a government of and by the people. The English democrat John Stuart Mill also wrote, "There is confessedly a strong tendency in the modern world towards the democratic constitution of society, accompanied or not by popular political institutions."

Democracy presupposes equal participatory rights. Accordingly, the advent of popular government and expanded electorate would lead to programmes for further social equalization and redistribution of power and opportunities. But democracy rests not just on the inherent equality of all men, but on their essential goodness or rationality. We do not subscribe to the view of social psychologist Gustav Le Bon that men behave collectively as highly emotional and irrational beings. Italian elite theorists like Mosca, Pareto and Michels also propagate a biased opinion that all democratic parties are based on pretence and that only small elites control the power to rule. When Michels argued in the early years of the 20th century that oligarchic trend or tendencies are manifest in democracies, one could approve his observation as a reference to the possible distortions in a democracy. But when Michels asserted that this could be considered as an 'iron law of oligarchy' and opined that democracy is an ideological myth, it could be hardly accepted by any believer in democratic values.

In the final years of the 20th century exponents of the New Right maintained that democracy fails because it is a regime of useless discussion and insufficient action. This, of course, has been a common charge against democracy. Critics have always pointed out that representative assemblies are mere talking shops. What the critics forgot is the fact that an assembly or a parliament is precisely meant to be a centre of debate and discussion. It is through discussions that 'important issues are resolved, interests can be bridged, effective compromise becomes possible.' The twentieth century also firmly established this fact that democratic system will be essentially party systems; democracy will mean enforcing party rule. Thus, when in post-World War (II) European politics a broad-based Christian democracy became popular, political leaders in West Germany and France emphasized that parliamentary

democracy meant strong leadership of the majority party. The crisis of the capitalist order in the West in the post-World War II period created grounds for the rise of the welfare state, as an alternative to the Soviet model of development as well as unbridled capitalism. By the 1960s the idea of welfare state gained prominence in the non-communist world. In the newly independent countries like India the major political party, the Congress party under Nehru's leadership, clearly announced its commitment to welfarism. As distinguished from socialism in the communist countries, the advocates of welfare state expressed virtually the agenda of social democracy. Nehru characterised it as the 'socialistic pattern of society' for India.

In the west, however, the concept of democracy grew more restrictive as a basis for economic policy. Thus in the 1980s conservative leaders like Ronald Reagan in USA and Mrs. Margret Thatcher in UK propagated that markets alone constitute the precondition of successful democracy. Democracy is thus made most compatible with capitalism. The conservatives prepared a neo-liberal framework for their democracies. In such a framework there is no room for welfarism. This is the philosophy of the New Right, bringing about a shift towards market oriented forms of organization. While advocating free economy, the supporters of New Right do not of course make the state weak. It is the welfarist agenda that becomes weak; but the police, the military and the bureaucracy, in short the political-administrative structure of the state, does not become weak. On the contrary, the neo-liberal state (the state of the New Right) is a very strong state even when it is a 'minimal state'. The neo-liberal states in the west (as in U.S.A) are, as well know, extremely powerful states politically and militarily. But they are minimal states as they have only the bare minimum programmes for peoples' welfare. They are democracies in terms of many structures and institutions like legislature, election machinery, universal suffrage etc. But in terms of spirit (character) these neo-liberal democracies in the west have moved far away from the Keynesian notion of welfarism that flourished in the mid-twentieth century.

2.3 Waves of democratization

The evolution of the theory and practice of democracy in the twentieth century may also be understood in terms of what Samuel Huntington has called the three waves of democratization. In Huntington's conceptualization the first two waves brought democracy in Western Europe and North America, while the third wave of democratization coincided with the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and East European countries. The first two waves produced liberal democracy in the west. The first wave had its beginnings in the 19th century, from 1828 onwards and continued in the 1920s involving countries like U.S.A, France and UK. The second wave occurred between 1943 and 1962 involving such countries like Germany and Italy in Europe and Japan and India in Asia. These states are called polyarchies (a term made popular by Robert Dahl) because of their competitive party systems and the institutionally guaranteed and protected civil liberties that they have. The most crucial aspect of democracy in these countries is widespread liberal individualism

promoted by the cultural and ideological orientation of the states. On the other hand some of these states claim a vigorous and healthy civil society. There is the additional claim of a reliable level of popular responsiveness in these countries. Of these, again, the American model of democracy is called "pluralist democracy" par excellence. An immense plurality of pressure groups operate in the American political system and these groups effectively influence the decision-making process.

The European polyarchies have developed another democratic system called 'consociational democracy." Consociational democracy, a label given by Arend Lijphart, refers to a kind of democratic system characterized by power sharing by a number of political parties or political organizations. In such systems consensus on vital issues is as important as is the practice of bargaining and power sharing. Consociational democracy, it is said, is particularly appropriate to societies that are divided by religious, cultural, regional, ideological and such other differences. In Europe countries like Austria, Switzerland and Belgium best illustrate cases of consociational democracy.

A kind of consociational democracy is also illustrated by India. Especially since the 1990s, when the practice of coalition-making at the Central Government level (apart from its presence at various provincial levels) becomes a regular, recurrent feature, when various parties arrive at a consensus to share power on the basis of a common programme, one can surely characterize it as a unique kind of consociational democracy.

It is in the last quarter of the 20th century that Huntington identified the third wave of democratization. It started with the overthrow of the rightist authoritarian regimes in Greece, Portugal and Spain and the ouster of military rulers in Latin America. And, of course, it ultimately coincided with the breakdown of the socialist systems after 1989. The East European states opted for the West European liberal democratic model. Adoption of multiparty elections and market based economic reforms are the two basic features of this new wave of democratization. But despite this third wave some observers would like to use the category "semi-democracy" for the post communist countries. It is, however, argued that, while they have all opted freely for the liberal framework, their immediate past of "high regimentation" would not allow them to gain a qualitatively high order of democratization very soon.

Significant differences can be identified among the democracies in practice. And since no system remains static, we may not view any model as an ideal one. There are differences even among the 'developed' North American Democracies, just as one European state differs from another in terms of the degrees of effectiveness of their institutions or in terms of the nature of participation of their peoples/citizens. And if one keeps in mind the sociological reality of 'cultural relativism' it will not be difficult to understand why all the democracies cannot be brought under a single category or why it becomes difficult to compare democracies emerging with different waves of democratization. In this connection one may refer to Francis Fukuyama's thesis entitled *The End of History* published in 1989. Fukuyama would claim that at the end of the 20th century there remains little scope for any new ideology to flourish. He would declare an end to the history of ideas and ideologies. According to him, western societies have attained the zenith in terms of political ideology

and it is liberal democracy which marks the highest achievement of human beings in terms of political institution making. Fukuyama was clearly glorifying the American model of polyarchy, American liberal democracy, as the end point of or the final form of political systems human beings are capable of constructing. But, as we have just noted, this type of announcement, like a soothsayer, about any ideal stage or final stage of polity is not only unscientific, but is also untenable. For, comparisons or judgments cannot be rendered on systems of ideas that are not only diverse in their nature and forms but have also widely diverse origins.

2.4 Robert Dahl on 20th century democracy

In his book *Democracy and its critics* the eminent American political theorist Robert Dahl writes, "Modern democratic ideas and practices are a product of two major transformations in political life. The first...swept into ancient Greece and Rome in the fifth century B.C...The second major transformation, to which we are the heirs, began with the gradual shift of the idea of democracy away from its historic locus in the city state to the vaster domain of the nation, country or national state." Dahl adds that while this second transformation gained momentum in the 19th century, in Europe and the English speaking world only in the 20th century the idea of democracy gained almost universal force as a political idea, an aspiration and an ideology.

According to Dahl, at least eight important consequences have followed from this epochal change in the evolution of democracy from city-state to nation-state. The consequences may be indicated as follows:

(1) Representation—People's representatives have displaced the so-called citizen's assembly of Greek democracy. [It is 'so called' because the citizens constituted at best one-third of the total population in Greek city states like Athens, based on slavery]. Moreover, this democratic representation is understood both as a historical phenomenon and as an application of the logic of equality to a large scale political system.

(2) Unlimited extension—It is not possible to specify a theoretical upper limit. The democratic republic of Judia with a population of more than one hundred crore illustrates this difficulty to determine the size of a democratic unit.

(3) Limits on Participatory Democracy—When the size of the democratic unit becomes big, the scope for political participation gets limited.

(4) Diversity—In larger units people are likely to reveal greater diversity in ways relevant to political life. Thus there may be regional loyalties, ethnic/racial identities, various life styles and so on. In the city states the citizen-body could be relatively homogenous. But in modern large-scale democracies the population is characterised by wide diversity of religion, political beliefs, language, history, myths etc.

(5) Conflict—Diversity leads to political divisions and conflicts. However, since the scale of political activity is enlarged in the modern (big size) democracies, political

cleavages and conflicts may not produce acute civil strife.

(6) Polyarchy— Dahl uses this term to characterise the democracies in the west as well as the large scale representative democracies as in India. Polyarchy is viewed as a system of political control in which the highest officials in the government are induced to modify their conduct so as to win elections in political competition with other candidates, parties and groups.

(7) Social and organizational pluralism—In these polyarchies there exist a significant number of social groups and organizations that are relatively autonomous with respect to one another and to the government itself.

(8) Expansion of individual rights— Polyarchical governments are, above all, characterized by an astounding expansion of individual rights. The number and variety of individual rights that are legally specified and effectively enforced have increased with the passage of time. Virtually all adults are entitled to primary political rights. And such individual rights as the "right to a fair trial" are extended to the whole population of the state. Dahl feels that the scale of modern democracies may stimulate a concern for rights as alternatives to participation in collective decisions. And he adds that in a polyarchy the rights of citizenship include the opportunity to oppose and elect the highest officials in the government.

The institutions of polyarchy that strengthen the democratic process of a government have been noted by Dahl as follows: (a) Elected officials; (b) Free and fair elections; (c) Inclusive suffrage; (d) Right to run for office; (e) Freedom of expression; (f) Alternative information; (g) Associational autonomy.

2.5 Models of democracy

Political scientists and philosophers in the 20th century have discussed various models of democracy. As we have just noted, Robert Dahl has presented the model of pluralist democracy and polyarchy. Marxist political theorists would present a model of People's democracy. David Held has examined some rival models of democracy like protective democracy, developmental democracy and participatory democracy, which fall under the liberal variant.

A kind of direct democracy operated in ancient Athens. However imperfect it might be, the city-state model of the ancient Greeks may be taken as the classical model of democracy. While thinkers like J.J. Rousseau were greatly influenced by the city-state model and while a state like Switzerland has still some provisions for direct democratic devices, the classical 'polis' (city-state) model has very little relevance in modern large scale democracies. Moreover, the classical model was based on a system of gross inequality and deprivation. Citizenship rights were not meant for the large number of metics (outsiders) who stayed in the city. The women members were also not participating in the political system as they remained confined to domestic duties only. And the large number of slaves were there to provide enough leisure time to the citizens (who thus constituted a minority of total populations) to participate in the functioning of the so-called "direct" democracy.

The Protective Model

This model emerged at a time when government was viewed as a power that could make unnecessary encroachments in individual life. In this sense, this model was the antithesis of the 20th century notion of liberal yet egalitarian welfare state. It took some time to arive at this point. From John Locke in late 17th century to Jeremy Bentham in late 18th century it was the English philosophers who had constructed this model. It justifies democracy in the libertarian spirit and is thereby individualist in orientation. Early liberalism, concerned deeply with ensuring maximum liberty for the individual, expressed this desire to protect the individual from the absolutism of mighty governments. John Locke's theory of "government by consent" proposes a model of protective democracy. To protect the individual rights to life, liberty and property Locke declared them as Natural Rights. A government no doubt has the right to impose taxes. Accordingly, Locke would propose that individual citizens must exercise their natural right to elect legislators so that their property is protected from aggressive expropriation. Jeremy Bentham, a greater democrat than Locke (for historical reasons) and his friend James Mill presented the utilitarian case for "protective democracy". Bentham's principle of the "greatest good (happiness) of the greatest number" would be realized in a representative system which refrains from doing anything that may reduce pleasure (happiness) or increase pain of the citizens. It was thus aimed at protecting the happiness of the citizens. In this way the model of protective democracy not only proposes a kind of constitutional or limited democracy but in fact a sort of negative democracy. Ultimately protective democracy turns into a political system for the free-trade economy. Modern neo-liberals and the supporters of the New Right view this model approvingly.

The Developmental Model

An alternative model of democracy concerned with the development of the individual came from thinkers like Rousseau (a contemporary of Bentham) on the one hand and John Stuart Mill (a student of Bentham) on the other. Rousseau was primarily concerned with freedom and he believed that men would be really free when they could participate directly and regularly in the polity. And in a different way he would argue that it is under the sovereignty of the General Will that the individual attains genuine freedom. Also called 'common good', the General Will is defined as the collective power spirit emerging as a product of all the 'real wills' of the individuals in the community. The 'real will' is the will of the individual's highest self that is distinguished from 'actual will' which is the will of the lower self or the narrow self. By obeying the General Will (that is, a person's higher self) citizens are believed to be ushering in a radical developmental democracy.

Another form of developmental democracy emerged from the writings of J.S. Mill, son of James Mill. He considered democracy to be ideally the best form of government, despite its limitations. And he wanted democracy for the best and balanced development of the potentialities of the individual. Like Rousseau Mill also wanted broadening of popular participation (however, he would exclude the illiterate men and women). But unlike Rousseau, Mill did not advance any notion of common good. On the contrary, he even pleaded for plural voting (or weightage voting), determined in terms of the skills/qualities of individuals.

He thus pleaded for minority rights and warned against the 'tyranny of the majority' (that is, oppression by the average collectivity). Mill was an elitist. Hence his developmental model was coloured by a strong status oriented individualism. He was against a democracy that would encourage mediocrity, uniformity and dull conformism.

The Participatory Model

The ancient Greek city-states represented a kind of participatory democracy. But as we have noted earlier, the Athenian 'polis' (city-state model) did not allow participation to a large number of people—metics (outsiders), women and slaves. In the more egalitarian modern large scale democracies, participatory politics has various forms. For example, plebiscitary democracy. This is a form of direct democracy which operates through an unmediated link between the ruler and the ruled. Here members of the public present their views directly. Apart from plebiscites, methods like referendum are also used as supplement to the system of representative democracy. Another form of participatory democracy is pluralist democracy. This is characteristic of many liberal democracies. It operates through the functioning of organized pressure groups (interest groups) that articulate various kinds of popular demands. Pluralist democracy is also viewed as a corrective to majoritarianism. Systematic and organized pressure from various interest groups (reflecting a wide diversity of public opinions) will ensure necessary response from the government. The effective working of pluralist democracy, however, depends on certain preconditions like wide dispersal of power amongst competing groups, accountability of the group leaders to the members, accessibility of the government machinery etc.

The Marxist model of Democracy

An important innovation in democratic thinking in the 20th century is to be found in the Marxist version. Variously termed as 'People's Democracy,' 'Proletarian Democracy' or even 'Socialist Democracy' this model gained significance following the Leninist and Maoist practices in Russia and China respectively.

The principal concern of this model is the improvement of the lot of the exploited and oppressed masses. Closely connected with the conception of social revolution, the people's democratic model indicts all other models of democracy as mere formal arrangements devoid of the essence of democracy. The 'democratic essence,' according to this model, lies in the uplift of the exploited millions. The capitalist system of society and economy no doubt prepared the base for democratic institution making by destroying feudal social/political and economic structures. But capitalism ultimately provides the benefits of democracy to a minority, the privileged minority. Real democracy comes only through a socialist revolution. For the Marxist, a socialist system provides the real opportunity for wholesale democratization, hence 'true' democracy is socialist democracy. The very process of social (socialist) revolution also remarkably being democratic; for such revolution involves the participation of thousands of men and women. The famous 'Long March' in China in 1930s is one such example of people's participation. The Marxists claim that in Russia in 1917 and in China in 1949 the revolutionary movements/uprisings led to the institutionalization of people's power.

According to the Marxists, democracy in the capitalist states (Eastern and Western) is bourgeois democracy where the vast majority virtually remains outside the scope and opportunities provided by the formal democratic set up. Hence the need arises to establish real democracy or peoples' democracy by overthrowing the capitalist structures. Following the first socialist revolution (in Russia), its principal leader V.I. Lenin raised the slogan "All Power to the Soviets." The Soviets' meant 'councils', that is, elected bodies at the grassroot level of working men and women. There came up in post-revolutionary Russia innumerable Soviets or councils of workers, council of soldiers, council of peasants, all these producing a kind of 'commune democracy.' In short, Marxists made experiments in real grassroots democracy. Unfortunately in both the countries the commune democracy or people's democracy got distorted by the overall control and manipulation by the highly centralised communist parties. In the name of representing the interests of the working class the communist party would actually impose the dictates of the party oligarchs and 'party bureaucracy' on the people and on all state apparates. In Soviet Russia (from the 1930s till the death of Stalin in 1953) there operated the worst form of such party bureaucratic control under Stalin's supreme leadership. And in China the peoples' commune did not last long and after the death of Mao-ze-Dong people's democracy gradually got replaced by a new and peculiar combination of market system elite leadership and party control.

2.6 Sample questions

Long questions :

1. Write a note on the "three waves of democratization."
2. Examine, after David Held, the models of democracy.

Medium questions :

1. Attempt an overview of how democracy evolved in the 20th century.
2. Write a note on Robert Dahl's understanding of democracy.

Short questions :

1. What is meant by the "third wave of democratization"?
2. What, according to Dahl, is meant by polyarchy?
3. What, according to David Held, is the meaning of the "developmental model" of democracy?

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Unit 3 □ Nationalism

Structure

3.1 Objectives

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

(a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with an overall view of nationalism.
(b) Origin and meaning of nationalism.
(c) Typology and components of nationalism.
(d) Challenges to nationalism.

3.2 Introduction

In the vocabulary of modern Political Science nationalism is one of the most contested concepts encountered by us. As yet there is hardly any consensus among the commentators on nationalism in regard to its understanding. There are advocates of nationalism who prefer a soft version in the sense that for them nationalism concerns identity consciousness, selfhood, demand for recognition of the unique attributes of a people bound together by certain common boundaries, political as well as cultural. This may be called the inclusive model. Again, there are defenders of nationalism who identify nationalism with patriotism, taking thereby a hard view. This may turn out to be an exclusionary version of nationalism, resulting in an aggressive posture in relation to other states, providing thereby a jingoistic understanding.

Taking the cue from Andrew Vincent it may be further argued that there can be, therefore, two views of nationalism, primary and secondary. The primary view identifies nationalism with a sense of national self-consciousness, ethnic or linguistic identity, seeking political expression. Its lineage is traced to a common ancestry, history, culture and language, which figure as a focus of symbolic loyalty and affection. The secondary view associates nationalism with patriotism, ethnicity and racism, the result being promotion of a kind of parochialism

or localism. While patriotism involves a sense of loyalty, pride and love of one's country, ethnicity refers to factors like kinship, understood mostly in biological or genetic terms. Scholars like Anthony Smith strongly argue that the essence of nationalism is ethnicity, emphasizing the ethno-symbolic character of nationalism. Racism became associated with nationalism, following the impact of the infamous ideology of national socialism (Nazism) on twentieth century Europe, although many commentators on nationalism contend that racism need not be considered as an integral component of nationalism.

A student of nationalism, however, is confronted with a number of puzzling questions on the issue of nationalism. First, there is a hiatus between the emergence of nationalism as a political ideology, which entered the political discourse of modern Europe rather recently, following the advent of democracy, industrialization and popular sovereignty around the eighteenth century, and the attempts to trace its origins to antiquity, a pre-modern, at times an imaginary past. Second, there is a mismatch between the all powerful claims and appeal of nationalism on the one hand and philosophical as well as theoretical ambiguities relating to ts origins as well as character. Third, the claim of nationalism as an ideology *per se* is clouded by the fact that nationalism itself is an eclectic doctrine for the reason that it draws its resources from other ideologies like liberalism, fascism, conservatism and even socialism. Nationalism thus becomes an ideological hybrid, involving a kind of overlapping of ideas and viewpoints. Thus the question remains whether there is one or many nationalisms.

3.5 Origin and meaning

The origin of nationalism is traced to multiple sources and on this issue commentators differ. First, nationalism is believed to be rooted in the idea of the nation, which was a pre-modern concept rooted in antiquity and expressive of a form of ethnicity. Scholars like Anthony Smith emphasize this point and argue that ethnicity constitutes the foundation of nationalism and argue that 'modern nations simply extend, strengthen and streamline the ways in which members of *ethnie* associated and communicated." Second, there is the opinion initiated by Hans Kohn and broadly shared by scholars like Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson that nationalism is essentially a modern concept, dating back to the late 17th century, which flourished in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Third, historians like Eric Hobsbawm also consider nationalism as a modern concept and trace its origins to 1830, although fragments of the concept are to be found in the American and French Revolutions. This is broadly also the opinion of Gellner. Elie Kedouric traced nationalism to revolutions in 18th century German philosophy and taking the cue from him it can be argued that Fichte, von Humboldt, Adam Mueller considered nation as a culturally integrated community which can fulfil its destiny only when it is politically organized as an independent state. This led to two inferences. One : each individual could find ethical fulfilment by participating in the life of the nation-state , —— an idea associated with Hegel. Two : states in the pursuit of their national destiny might be justified in using force against other states.

Hobsbawm as well as Miroslav Hroch have analysed nationalism in terms of its distinct evolution rather than sticking to one singular meaning. Thus, according to Hroch, first, nationalism is embodied in 19th century folklore, customs and rituals and it is viewed essentially as a cultural idea, fostered by the middle and upper classes. Second, nationalism is pursued as a political campaign, associated with political parties. Third, it is translated into mass movements, drawing mass support. Hobsbawm too identifies three phases of nationalism. First, 1830-80 is the period of liberal nationalism. Second, 1880-1914 witnessed a conservative turn in nationalist thinking. Third, 1918-1950 was the time when nationalism reached its peak.

3.4 Typology and components of nationalism

There are variations of nationalism, manifest in its multiple forms. By and large the predominant forms of nationalism are : liberal, conservative, romantic, integral, religious and anti-colonial.

Liberal nationalism : Drawing its resources from the philosophy of Enlightenment, liberal nationalism, associated with Guiseppe Mazzini (1805-72), for example, proclaims that each nationality should be independent, but with constitutional and democratic government. It is basically a justification of the right of nations to self-determination. Two problems, however, remain. One : President Woodrow Wilson pointed out in the period of World War I that if every moderately sized community makes use of this right, then how to draw the line between genuine nationalism and secessionist movements on parochial grounds ? Two : a tricky theoretical question is involved in the sense that liberalism and nationalism are incompatible ideas, as liberalism logically leads to universalism and cosmopolitanism, while nationalism contests this understanding.

Conservative nationalism : Emerging primarily as a reaction to the French Revolution with its emphasis on the assertion of the individual, his autonomy and rights, conservative nationalism, associated with the ideas of Edmund Burke and Joseph de Maistre the nation was viewed as an ordered hierarchy, reflecting the spirit of an organic and integrated community, which should be left undisturbed. Conservative nationalism thus stood for the status quo, decrying change of the political order.

Romantic nationalism : This form of nationalism is essentially a German variant, associated with the writings of Fichte, Herder, Schlegel, Novalis, Mueller and their contemporaries. It envisaged the idea that a nation has to be identified with purity of language, folk tradition and customs, culture, a unique spirit or soul. This was expressed in the celebration of these ideas, as manifest in the educational curricula and different festivals of a number of states in the 19th century.

Integral nationalism : Basically espousing the cause of an integrated, mythical idea of a nation, integral nationalism spoke in defence of a totalitarian interpretation of nationalism. This understanding was the key to the flourishing of fascism in Italy and Germany in the inter-War period, since it led logically to the justification of an aggressive and narrow

perception of nationalism, which was incompatible with the claims of internationalism and cosmopolitanism.

Religious nationalism : This understanding identifies nationalism with a religious doctrine, giving birth to a theocratic state, which breeds intolerance towards others. Stretched to its extreme, it may further the cause of religious fundamentalism. In other words, this form of nationalism has close similarity with integral nationalism.

Anticolonial nationalism : This kind of nationalism thrived in the colonised world in the first five decades of the 20th century in consequence of struggle against colonial rule. In some countries the leaders of these struggles were guided by the liberal notion of nationalism (i.e. in India under the leadership of the Indian National Congress), while in many other parts of the world anti-colonial nationalism was guided by radical ideas like socialism and anarchism (i.e. in Africa).

These variations of nationalism provide clues to the understanding of some of the common components which constitute the ideology of nationalism. These are : human nature, language and nation state.

Human nature : One of the constituent components of nationalism is human nature. Its relation to nationalism is explained by the fact that human beings, despite their identifiable differences, possess the capacity for self-determination. Besides, the human self is socially rooted. Finally, human beings discover and realize themselves through their very own national communities and this is how a nation is projected as a metaphorical 'self' or 'personality' . The so-called personification of a nation is thus an extension of the human self.

Language : Although language is generally believed to be a crucial element underlying the idea of nationalism, there is a complexity involved in this perception. This is explained by the argument that there are many states in the world where many languages are spoken (i.e. Switzerland, India). There are also countries where the same language is spoken in multiple regional dialects and are incomprehensible. Yet language constitutes an important parameter, a thesis quite strongly espoused by Benedict Anderson. According to his understanding, the development of vernacular languages in Europe, which is a product of 'print capitalism', was a big step forward for the development of nationalism in Europe. The underlying argument is that printed language, especially the invention of newspaper, contributed in a big way to the integration of the community on the linguistic plane. Anderson further shows that Greek, Russian and Serbo-Croat nationalisms were greatly inspired by language studies, inventiveness in the field of philology and various literary activities. Similarly in the colonial countries of Asia and Africa the spread of printed vernaculars, together with the availability of literature on European nationalism, largely facilitated the deepening of nationalist feelings.

Nation states : Nationalism is essentially connected with the idea of statism. All advocates of nationalism associate this ideology with the idea of a strong state. Since the birth of the nation-state is only of recent origin and a modernist idea, nationalism too, as stated earlier, is believed to be a product of modernity. Besides, sovereignty being an attribute of the nation-state, there is an integral link between nationalism and sovereignty. While the notion

of sovereignty predated nationalism by centuries, in the 18th century, the era of the French Revolution, sovereignty assumed a new meaning in the sense that it now became associated with the concept of the people and the concept of popular sovereignty was now in circulation. Thus, as sovereignty was no longer viewed with reference to the ruler, the law or the monarch, rather in terms of the people, the term 'people' became coterminous with the idea of nation, and nationalism thus acquired a new dimension.

3.5 Challenges to nationalism

Although nationalism is a very popular and important concept in the vocabulary of modern Political Science, its claims have been contested from many quarters. First, there is the challenge of liberalism. Liberalism argues that, since contemporary societies are multinational and multicultural and are thereby multi-layered and heterogenous, it cannot espouse the cause of one single homogenous identity of the individual. It contests the claim of nationalism which involves the arbitrary privileging of one identity in particular. This leads to the legitimation of the majoritarian viewpoint and marginalization of the minority. Besides, the liberal understanding encourages cosmopolitanism and universalism, which is incompatible with the claims of nationalism.

Second, Marxism has been the other powerful ideological challenge to nationalism. The standard Marxist critique of nationalism is grounded in the argument that Marxism's ultimate goal being the accomplishment of a classless society, the particularity or localism of nationalism is found to be incompatible with it. For Marxists nationalism not only goes against class outlook but it also does not square with the Marxist idea that the modern nation state and thereby nationalism was the outcome of a process whereby capitalism had succeeded feudalism. This meant transition to market economy, development of centralized institutions and suppression of local differences. The Marxist project envisages the idea of emancipation from class exploitation as well as the narrow confines of nationalism, its ultimate goal being realization of a world free from exploitation on a universal scale.

Third, with the advent of globalization, coupled with the power of modern technology as well as the rise of neo-liberal economy, in recent times transnational corporations have emerged as a major force, posing a new challenge to nationalism. Its significance lies in the fact that as the national economy of a state is now almost inseparably linked with these organizations they have virtually emerged as a major challenge to the national sovereignty of the states. These have now come to be known as non-state actors, which dismiss the notion of national exclusiveness in the name of global connectivity and global market. Therefore, although the formal political boundaries remain, the claims of nationalism, traditionally associated with the assertion of state sovereignty, are now questioned, following the rise of these non-state actors.

Fourth, a new kind of challenge to nationalism is posed by the ideas of cosmopolitanism and internationalism. As we have seen, for historical reasons nationalism has been associated

with a spirit of exclusiveness, which ultimately has been manifest in the aggressive exploits of a state vis-a-vis other states, reflective of a spirit of intolerance and political superiority. European history has been replete with many such examples. Nationalism, thus, historically, is associated with memories of annexation, war and violence. A number of thinkers in the West as well as the East were disturbed by these developments and they uncompromisingly contested the claims of nationalism, guided by the spirit of cosmopolitanism and internationalism. For them nationalism is, indeed, a menace to. This was the position of Kant, who lauded the notion of cosmopolitanism and espoused the idea of perpetual peace and a kind of borderless world. Rabindranath Tagore was the other great advocate of the spirit of internationalism, who was equally critical of the spirit of nationalism as advocated by the European powers and also Japan, the newly emergent Asian power. Tagore's aversion towards nationalism is what distinguished him from the position of Ganndhi and also from many of his contemporaries in India, since he did never subscribe to the so-called exclusivism or nativism in the name of *swadeshi*. Visva Bharati, his dream project, at Santiniketan, standas as a monument to his cherished ideal of internationalism.

3.6 Sample questions

Long questions :

1. Examine the origin and meaning of nationalism.
2. Analyse the typologies of nationalism.

Medium questions :

1. Examine the components of nationalism.
2. Discuss the challenges to nationalism.

Short questions :

1. What is meant by 'hard nationalism'?
2. What is the meaning of romantic nationalism?
3. Why does Marxism contest the claims of nationalism?

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Unit 4 □ Fascism

Structure

4.1 Objectives

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

(a) In the Introduction the students will be made familiar with an overview of fascism.
(b) Origins of fascism.
(c) Nature of fascism.
(d) Various interpretations of fascism.

4.2 Introduction

Although fascism as a totalitarian and conservative ideology is generally associated with violence, militarism, ultra-nationalism, authoritarianism, one-party rule and personality cult, its theoretical underpinnings at times get blurred or are not properly addressed. This happens primarily for the reason that the image of fascism is generally known to us through its historically expressed forms, that is, the forms it assumed in Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany. These, of course, were the two main variations in the history of fascism but the fascist outlook was expressed in other forms too, i.e. in Portugal under Salazar and in Spain under Franco in the inter-War period. In Asia during the same period fascism came to power in Japan and assumed a highly aggressive form. In a number of regimes in central and eastern Europe in the period between the two World Wars fascism had come to power, assuming various forms. In the common parlance fascism is generally believed to be an ideology that stands opposed to a set of values with which we are familiar in a democratic set up. One thus hardly bothers to look into its origins and the philosophical/theoretical sources which are deeply embedded in the tradition of Western political thought. It is also generally believed that, unlike other ideologies like liberalism or socialism, fascism being a twentieth century phenomenon, its roots also do not go beyond that century. This impressionistic understanding of fascism, however, does not provide any real or proper

understanding of fascism as an ideology. Moreover, as Andrew Vincent has argued, the manifest, visible character of fascism quite often blurs the complex, ambivalent nature of fascist ideology in the sense that it is through rhetoric and propaganda that fascism makes itself visible to the public, while its ideological pronouncements remain at times quite unclear. The ideological ambiguity underlying fascism, for example, is expressed in the Nazi coinage of expressions like "national socialism", drawing superficial parallels to the socialist ideology. Again, Mussolini, the father figure of Italian fascism, had his earlier affiliation with the Italian Socialist Party and many Italian fascists in the early phase of fascism in Italy were inclined to call themselves "national syndicalists" , although fascism had no ideological affinity with syndicalist socialism except their apparent similarity in regard to state-centrism.

4.3 Origins

The term "fascism" is derived etymologically from the Latin word *fasces*, meaning bundles of rods bound together, symbolizing unity of strength, in ancient Rome. Interestingly, while this spirit of unity and strength was used by the advocates of Italian fascism under Mussolini, the term *fasci* assumed a socialist connotation too, when revolutionary Sicilian groups in Italy referred to themselves as fascists in 1892. In fact, Mussolini was a member of the Italian Socialist Party during the period of the First World War and it was only after he formed his own party and assumed political power in Italy that fascism began to be considered as a right-wing ideology, which was conservative in orientation and directed against both liberalism and socialism.

Broadly speaking, there are four points to which the origins of fascism can be traced. First, it is believed to be an instinctual state of mind, — an idea linked to the German idea of "Volk" (folk) consciousness. In Germany the Nazi ideology related this notion to the Nordic spirit, while the Italian fascists related their vision to the history of the Roman Empire. Second, fascism, with its focus on nationalism, power and strength, ironically, traces its roots to the Renaisssance and Enlightenment. For example, a noted Italian fascist, Alfredo Rocco, considered Machiavelli, Vico and Mazzini as the sources of Italian fascism, his focus being on their action-oriented philosophy. Third, a stream of intellectual currents that characterized 19th century Europe i.e. German romanticism, social Darwinism, elite theory, corporatism, vitalism and syndicalism, focusing simultaneously on the self, subjectivity and collectivity, acted as the cultural stimulus for the rise of fascism. Fourth, a good number of historians like Ernst Nolte, F.L. Carsten, Hugh Trevor-Roper argue that fascism was essentially a post World War I or inter-War period phenomenon and thereby the product of a specific historical moment. According to this understanding, the coming together of a number of historical events, i.e. the victory and defeat of the parties involved in the War, Germany's forced acceptance of the humiliating terms of the Versailles Treaty, the Russian Revolution and the rise of the organized Left, collapse of the Weimar Republic and the

Great Depression paved the way for the rise of fascism in Europe, notably in Italy and Germany.

4.4 Nature

Although fascism has many variations, the following elements can be associated with the nature of fascism as an ideology.

One : The fascist understanding of human nature is that it is characterized by the primacy of will and activism. As action is primary, thought is secondary. This prepared the ground for legitimation of violence and eclipse of reason in fascism. Young fascist activists were thus prompted to associate violence with activism in romantic, crusading and chivalrous terms. Moreover, the typical fascist thinking considers humans as social or communal creatures shaped by nature, which thereby belittles the role of the individual and encourages the understanding that unconditional inequality is biologically determined and, therefore, irremovable.

Two : Fascism is inherently anti-liberal for the reason that it opposes pluralism, individualism, parliamentary democracy, separation of powers, the doctrine of natural rights, egalitarianism, open society, cosmopolitanism and the idea of tolerance. However, as Griffin reminds us, fascism does not oppose parliamentary democracy in principle. It makes use of the democratic institutions to come to power in order to finally destroy it and establish one-party rule, as it happened when Hitler came to power in 1933.

Three : Although it is generally believed that fascism is conservative in its outlook, one of its major allies being the Church and its strategy being that of using the symbols of the past to foment ultra-nationalist feelings, it would be wrong according to Griffin to simply characterise fascism as a conservative ideology. This is explained by the fact that, while fascism glorifies symbols and myths of the past, this is done not out of a sense of nostalgia or on considerations of restoration of the past. The project of fascism is renewal and rebirth of the old order according to its very own modern design, where the nation's past has an instrumental value but it in no way entails the idea of rolling the clock back. This, for example, is exactly what Mussolini did in Italy by invoking the glory of ancient Rome.

Four : It operates by promoting a charismatic form of politics, because, to take the cue from Max Weber, it rejects both traditional and legal-rational authority. This, again, was most strongly evident when Mussolini and Hitler came to be popularly known as 'Duce' and 'Fuehrer', that is, the leader, in their respective countries. While some specialists are prone to attributing a sense of religiosity to fascism on this ground, arguing that fascism thus is a 'secular', 'civic' or 'political' religion, it needs to be kept in mind that fascism ultimately operates in human society, through human agency and very much within the framework of human history. In other words, unlike religion, fascism lacks any kind of metaphysical dimension that characterises religion and is also antithetical to the message of peace and tolerance that all great religions of the world espouse.

Five : Fascism is strongly anti-rational in orientation. Thus, it does not fall in line with the Enlightenment tradition of Europe nor does it share the outlook of the humanist as well as positivist tradition of the West, which went into the making of liberalism. Rather, by harping on myth, belief, symbols and adhering to concepts like nation, leader and cultural identity fascism turns out to be an ideology that promotes anti-rationalism.

Six : Fascism cleverly uses the slogan of socialism in order to hoodwink the masses, as Nazism did in Hitler's Germany. The Nazi Party proclaimed that its ideology was national socialism and, significantly, the full name of the party of Hitler was National Socialist German Workers' Party, although immediately after coming to power in 1933 Hitler banned the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Communist Party of Germany (KPD), unleashing terror and repression on these two parties throughout the Nazi period. The apparent affinity of fascism to socialism is explained by the fact that one of its strategies was to counter the claims of Russian Bolshevism and this involved establishment of the counter claim that fascism was the only 'true' socialism, the argument being that unlike capitalism it espoused a high degree of centralised control and planning, together with corporatist economics, whereby a new order would be created, based on the advances made by capitalism, and enslavement and exploitation would thus cease to exist.

Seven : Fascism is integrally connected with the notion of totalitarianism, since it believes in the idea that the life of the individual is to be infused with a moral purpose and a sense of heroism by being symbiotically linked to the life of the state. To work out this scheme fascism launches a massive programme of social engineering through the creation of a highly centralized 'total' state with draconian powers. This involves establishment of a sophisticated machinery for manufacturing consensus through propaganda and ideological indoctrination, together with repression and terror, to be launched against anyone who refuses to subscribe to this understanding. Any kind of dissent is thus forbidden in a fascist regime.

Eight : Unlike Marxism, which draws its support predominantly from the working class, the social basis of fascism is quite heterogenous. It aims at drawing support from and reaching out to all sections of society, including an aristocrat, a peasant, an unemployed worker, an 'educationally challenged' person or a pavement dweller, because this is how the social support of the 'total state' is secured.

Nine : Fascism is intrinsically opposed to the values of cosmopolitanism and thereby is intolerant of a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-racial society. Although in all fascist regimes it does not necessarily express itself in a campaign of propaganda and violence against the presence of 'immigrants', 'foreigners' or 'outsiders' who have allegedly abandoned their 'natural' homeland *per se*, Hitler's project of anti-Semitism was a naked manifestation of this understanding.

4.5 Interpretations

The ideology of fascism has been viewed from many angles and there is, therefore, no consensus in regard to the understanding of the nature of fascism. These contending interpretations throw interesting light on the complex character of this ideology.

Marxist : One of the earliest interpretations of fascism was provided by the Marxists although among the Marxists there are three major variations. The most well-known interpretation is associated with the Comintern understanding, expressed in the writings of Georgi Dimitrov, who argued that the rise of fascism is traceable to the antagonisms between industrial monopolization and the democratic aspirations of the masses. Fascism was a tool in the hands of monopoly capitalism to violently repress the interests of the working class in the interests of big business and monopoly capital. But it has been pointed out by some commentators that this explanation is not satisfactory for the reason that if fascism is integrally connected with monopoly capital and big business, then how can one explain the rise of fascist regimes in a number of countries in Central and East Europe like Hungary and Romania, where the development of capitalism was quite low? A second interpretation was provided by the acclaimed Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. For Gramsci fascism was not simply an economic phenomenon. Rather it is an ideology the materiality of which cannot be denied. Fascism could take hold of the mind of the masses in Italy on the level of consciousness as an ideology and the importance of confronting fascism on the ideological level , therefore, is a primary task. A third variation is associated with the writings of Nicos Poulantzas, who argued that fascism is a form of Bonapartism or Caesarism whereby an extra-parliamentary group makes use of the difference of interests between finance and industrial capital and runs the state autonomously and according to this understanding fascism does not specifically represent the interests of any one particular class.

Psychological : This is an understanding which tries to explain the phenomenon of fascism in terms of the psychohistory of the fascists, the psychic orientation of the fascist mind. Erich Fromm, Theodor Adorno, Wilhelm Reich and a number of scholars who have worked on Freud and Jung have looked upon fascism from the psychological angle. Thus it has been argued by the advocates of this interpretation that certain forms of isolation, displacement, repression of early sexuality, denial of creativity generate among males a sense of frustration and powerlessness. This, in turn, gives rise to aggression and sado-masochism, which later in life translates itself politically into acts of violence. Thus, Wilhelm Reich called for a sexual revolution because he believed that this alone could ensure sexual liberation whereby the road to fascism could be blocked. Theodor Adorno coined the phrase 'authoritarian personality' and argued that the German lower middle class, which suffered alienation and loss of security after World War I, developed sadistic and masochistic traits of character, shaping thereby an authoritarian personality. It is around this personality that fascism thrived in future.

Religious and moral : Philosophers like Bendetto Croce and R.G. Collingwood view

fascism as the product of an age that lost its moral fibre and religious faith. Thus, Croce, the great Italian philosopher, argued that fascism was a corruption of the Italian tradition of liberty, as he lamented that it is only when decadence sets in , it is only among decadent people that authoritarian governments survive. Collingwood, the British philosopher, argued that fascism thrived because it was a challenge to the Christian tradition and that the value of liberty had been distilled from the practice of Christianity. Rauschning, one of the earliest German commentators on fascism, described the fascist philosophy as an expression of cultural and moral nihilism, virtually pronouncing the 'death of God'.

Political : Basically the political interpretation of fascism focuses on the fact that fascism was the result of the crisis of liberal democracy in Europe. It was the erosion and collapse of the values of liberalism that contributed to the rise of fascism in the inter-War period. Moreover, there are commentators who focus on the political dimension of the biographical accounts of the fascist leaders and argue that authoritarian streak was embedded in their personalities. This, in turn, facilitated the emergence of fascism.

4.6 Sample questions

Long questions :

1. Examine the nature of fascism as an ideology.
2. Write a note on the contending interpretations of fascism.

Medium questions :

1. Trace the origins of fascism.
2. Analyse the psychological and political interpretations of fascism.

Short questions :

1. Why is it argued that fascism as an ideology gets blurred by its rhetoric?
2. Explain the relation between fascism and conservatism.
3. Comment on the marxist interpretation of fascism.

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Unit 1 □ Socialism

Structure

1.1 Objectives

On going through this Unit we shall be able to understand

- The historical context of the emergence of modern socialist ideas
- Important implications of the industrial revolution in Europe
- The different types of socialist ideas that exist
- The nature of Utopian Socialism, Fabianism, Guild Socialism, Syndicalism and Scientific Socialism
- Basic tenets of socialism
- the pros and cons of socialism

1.2 Introduction

Socialism is a widely used term but, as Joad had observed, it is "like a hat that has lost its shape because everyone wears it". This popular term is variedly perceived and defined in a variety of ways. The given definitions hardly rally around a central, agreed theme and

resting on the different opinions, multiple schools of socialist thought have emerged over the years.

There are to be found within the broad spectrum of socialist thought, different shades of opinions. These range from the views of the Utopian Socialists, Fabian Socialists, Syndicalists, Guild Socialists, Democratic Socialists, State Socialists to the Scientific Socialists or the Marxist Socialists as they are variedly termed. In fact, it would hardly be wrong to say that there are very few terms in Political Science which have given rise to so much controversy as the term socialism has done.

While the absence of agreement between different schools of socialists have already been taken note of, a few general definitions may be given attention to. This would help us in understanding the broad premises of Socialism.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines socialism as " that policy or theory which aims at securing by the action of the central democratic authority a better distribution and in due subordination thereto a better production of wealth than now prevails."

According to professor Ely, "A Socialist is one who looks to society organised in the state for aid in bringing about a more perfect distribution of economic goods and an elevation of humanity; the individualist regards each man not as his brother's keeper , but as his own, and desires every man to work out his own salvation material and spiritual." [cf. James Wilford Garner, *Introduction to Political Science].*

Despite the many differences amongst different schools of socialist thought, some of the basic tenets on which most tend to agree in varying degrees are as follows:

i) scepticism regarding private ownership of the means of production and capitalism.
ii) collective ownership and management of all industries, including land and capital and the instruments of production and transportation is projected,
iii) in place of private ownership and management of industry, socialists speak of cooperative ownership and state management of the instruments of production,
iv) State's intervention under a socialist system is expected to extend from the control of industrial undertakings to establishment of securities for workmen and attempts to equalise incomes as far as possible,
v) Emphasis on society as a composite whole and the viewing of the individual as a part of that social whole,
vi) Respect for labour and its claims to justice.

1.3 The Historical Context of the Emergence of Modern Socialist Ideas

According to some scholars the roots of socialist ideas can be traced far back into the history of Plato's *Republic* and the ideas of communism expressed therein, others tc Christianity and many to the radical movements in the English Civil War in the 17" century. Modern socialist ideas, however, are largely the product of the Industrial Revolution and the

French Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th century in Europe saw the rise of factories the emergence of the industrial working class and the intense oppression of labour inhuman working conditions, expansion of slums, and the absence of basic amenities.

It is against such a background that various strands of socialist ideas developed with the respective prescriptions for ameliorating the conditions of the working class. Increasingly the term became common.

The socialist ideas stood out in sharp contrast to the Laissez Fare doctrine which had built up the justification for restricting the activities of the state to the narrowest possible limits and thereby allowing for the non-interference of the state in economic matters, and which in course of time came up for criticism for allowing the unhindered exploitation of labour.

Socialism stood out in opposition to all this. It called for a maximum , rather than a minimum of government. Rightly structured, the Socialists believed, the state would be able to protect the interests of the working class and promote the common economic, moral and intellectual interests of the people.

Modern socialism, with its evolving and continuous set of ideas and movements, became visible in the first part of the nineteenth century Europe. Around that time, we find that people everywhere were beginning to toy with socialist philosophies and considering how to put them into practice. These people (including men like John Stuart Mill) were of many types, advocating many different types of socialism, but they all contributed in their own ways to the laying down of the basic theoretical framework for a movement that was to last into the present day.

We shall now examine some of the main strands of socialist thought as they have emerged over the years.

1.4 Utopian Socialism

Utopian Socialism was the first significant form of modern socialism. The Utopian mode of thought governed the socialist ideas of the nineteenth century and developed simultaneously in various forms in the ideas of a number of thinkers. It had a significant following amongst French and English socialists. The term 'Utopian' was used for these early socialist thinkers including Saint -Simon, Fourier and Owen by Marx and Engels in a critical vein and that label stuck to their identity.

These early socialists found that the existing economic system around them in the world was incredibly unfair to the average worker. This dissatisfaction per se generated in their minds numerous queries. They questioned whether the ruling class, the owners of the industry, should be in control of so much power. Was it their place to choose who should work? Should they be allowed to fix wages and use workers for their own means of profit? The socialists thought not. They saw socio-economic equality as the next step on a path begun by the political equalities won in the American and French Revolutions. Many of

these early socialists were Utopian Socialists. They dreamt of creating ideal communities, or cooperative communes dedicated to the fair treatment of all individuals of society. To the Utopian Socialists, socialism was the expression of absolute truth, reason and justice. It had, they believed, only to be discovered in order to conquer the world by virtue of its own power. Considered as absolute truth, Socialism was treated as independent of time, space and historical development of man. In order to remove the ills of society, reason had to be used to discover the blueprint of a perfect social order. Such a society was to be brought about through a process of sustained propaganda and, where possible, model experiments.

Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) served as the foundation for much of their dream. For More, Utopia was both "no-place" and "good place." Utopia was the good place that nowhere existed, but it was also the good place that can never exist. Utopia was both a real critical ideal and a wildly impossible fantasy. To be "Utopian" was either to be a radical visionary or a romantic naif.

Two noted Utopian thinkers were Robert Owen and Count de Saint-Simon.

Robert Owen was born in 1771.

He was distressed at the treatment meted out to workers and children in factories. As such, he made it his mission to attempt to change the way labourers were being treated. With amazing business acumen, he rose quickly in the textile industry. In course of time he gained ownership of New Lanark, a village of about 2000 people with a number of factories. To try and realise his vision, he immediately reduced working hours, cut back on child employment, built schools, and raised living conditions. To the surprise of all in England, despite all these measures, he still managed to reap large profits. He wrote books and worked hard to publicize his success, hoping to convince politicians to pass new reforms and convince other factory owners of the possibility his vision held. His ultimate dream was to expand the idea of fair treatment to the agricultural sector and all areas of society and to create a "new moral order." His greatest effort was in the establishment of a community in Indiana called New Harmony. Established under the guidance of his son in 1826, Owen imagined it as the ideal community, completely self-sufficient. After five years, however, the commune collapsed. Owen was no doubt disappointed, but he continued to work for reform till his last days in 1858.

The French were also extremely involved in the development of Utopian socialism. The father of this movement in France was Count de Saint-Simon (1760-1825). He was relatively young during the French Revolution, but was no doubt influenced by its revolutionary politics. Saint-Simon and his followers, the Saint-Simons, believed that a team of scientists or social experts who would plan various public works projects as well as manage all labour in the country, should head the government. His followers were the first socialists to suggest that a planned society was the best hope for giving workers livable conditions, an idea that would far outlast their small movement. To Saint Simon the main antagonism was between the 'workers' and 'idlers'. The 'idlers' were not just the members of the old privileged classes but included all those who, without taking part in production or distribution, lived on others incomes.

Individually the Utopian Socialists were not profound thinkers, but collectively their intellectual heritage proved valuable. They were conscious of the interconnections between the various dimensions of the problems in existing society and believed that their needed to be a transformation rather than piecemeal social reforms. Utopians made a considerable contribution to socialism by focusing on the specific values of cooperation, association and harmony in the context of egalitarianism. They provided the link between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. They felt the impact of the French Revolution on the one hand, and on the other they attempted to interpret the fears and aspirations of man in the industrial age.

Owen and Saint-Simon were not alone. Nineteenth century socialism, until the emergence of Marxism, was dominated by Utopian thought and Europe produced many other great Utopian socialist thinkers during this time, among whom were Louis Blanc and Charles Fourier. In fact, the ideology never fully died. Small, but fervent, groups continued to periodically form experimental communes with mixed results, still hoping to one day succeed, and convince the world to change. It is interesting to note that there has been a sort of revival of interest in recent years in the Utopian socialists . This is partly due to the disillusionment with centralized state socialism and partly owing to the growth of green ideas.

1.5 Fabianism

In England by the late 19th century, many felt a need for socialist change. In the early eighties several socialist movements got under way in England. Various factors worked as catalytic agents. These factors included the extension of the franchise to industrial workers by the Act of 1867 followed by the popular disappointment over its effects upon the government's policy in dealing with urgent problems of taxation and industrial regulation; the financial depression of the seventies; the agitation over the land question; the spread of Marx's ideas in England through the translated versions of his works being published, and attacks by eminent British economists upon the traditional doctrine of laissez faire. Several organisations , active in propagating socialist ideas in one or other form, were established. These included the Social Democratic Federation, the Socialist League, the Independent Labour Party and the Fabian Society.

The Fabian Society was formed on October 24, 1883, by Edith Nesbit and Hubert Bland, who created a socialist debate group with Edward Pease, though the actual name for the society was suggested the next year , i.e., in 1884, by a new member, Frank Podmore. George Bernard Shaw joined the society in September 1884, and Sidney Webb the following year. These two were to become in course of time, active and influential members of the society.

The society was named after Fabius Cunctator, a Roman general famous for his cautious military tactics in avoiding direct battle with Hannibal; instead favoring quick, minor attacks,

and thus avoiding defeat. Indeed, he was the perfect symbol of their thought process.

The Fabians (as members of the society came to be called) stressed that social democracy would come not through revolution and violence, but rather from slow and steady democratic movement. Their primary belief was that capitalism, at its very root, was unfair to the majority of people and an unfit economic system for a modem society. Their solution, the one stressed by nearly all socialists, was that the workers should own the means of production. For the Fabians, legislation, protest, and localized action were the ways to achieve this and offered the greatest potential for a cure for the plight of the proletariat. They chose education and gradual acceptance of socialist thought, instead of forced, violent indoctrination.

Though Fabians disagreed with Marx over the point of revolution, their movement was just as much in support of core socialist values, such as the need to help workers and create economic equality. Members of the Fabian Society worked with major trade unions and other workers' rights groups to help form the Labour Party in 1906. Since this formation the two groups have always had a close relationship and the society was involved in the election of many important officials within the party during the twentieth century.

The movement, appealed to the working class. But its main support came from the well off parts of society. These people funded large amounts of research into economic and societal conditions in the country seeking to promote careful analysis of fact and study.

The Fabians reflected an important change in the climate of British public opinion, namely, a loss of confidence in the alleged social efficacy of private enterprise and an increased willingness to use the states' legislative and administrative power to correct its abuses and to humanise it. It is significant to note that the Fabians defended their program as an extension of Liberalism. In the *Fabian Essays* (1889), Sidney Webb asserted, ' the economic side of the democratic ideal is , in fact, socialism itself.'.

The Fabians disintegrated in the 1930s. The Fabian Socialists, it may be said, contributed more to practice than to theory. The diligence with which they collected and explained facts about the actual economic and social conditions of Britain contributed significantly to the success with which governments in that country gradually and cautiously put into action various welfare schemes. The chief factor of their strength had been their skill in working out definite and workable schemes for immediate application by way of (1) social legislation - shorter hours, safeguards against unemployment; minimum standards of health , safety and wages; improved educational opportunities (2) public ownership of public utilities; and (3) taxation of inheritance, ground rents and investment incomes.

The influence of the Fabian Society continues to exist even today. It can be noted in the educational and awareness activities, and in the left of center think-tank for the British Labour Party it helped to create.

1.6 Guild Socialism

Guild Socialism, as a form of socialism, emerged in Great Britain in the first decade of

the twentieth century, drawing on and reacting to the experience of the founders of the Fabian society and of the socialist opposition to Fabianism. The central aim of Guild Socialism was expressed in the phrase "self-government in industry," with the emphasis on the factory or other workplace as the unit of self-government. However, consumers' interests were quite explicitly to be represented in industry as well, though Guild Socialists differed among themselves somewhat on the details. Perhaps most interestingly, and importantly, Guild Socialism went further than most other forms of socialism in providing directly and explicitly for the withering away of the state, which was to begin, not in the distant future, but immediately following the establishment of a Guild Socialist system.

The basic ideas of Guild Socialism first appeared in the writings of A.J.Penty, an architect, A.R.Orage, a schoolmaster, journalist and philosophical essayist, and S.G.Hobson, a journalist and public lecturer. They were originally members of the Fabian Society but became dissatisfied with the Fabians' emphasis on centralised political socialism. In 1915, the National Guilds League was formed, amongst others by W.Mellor and M.B.Reckitt. This body became the main centre of Guild Socialist propaganda. It published a monthly magazine called the Guildsman, issued pamphlets and leaflets and sold books written by its members. It found a receptive audience in the British labour movement as they brought to the British working men ideas for which they were somewhat prepared by experience. There were close links between the Guild Socialists and important trade union groups.

Guild Socialism believed in withdrawing from the owners of capital both the power to determine the conditions under which labourers would work and the right to derive profits out of what labourers produced.

Guild Socialism advocated a system of industrial self-government through national worker-controlled guilds. The theory, as originated by Arthur J. Penty in his *Restoration of the Guild System* (1906), stressed the spirit of the medieval craft guilds. The Guild Socialists held that workers should work for control of industry rather than for political reform. The function of the state in a guild-organized society was to be that of an administrative unit and owner of the means of production; to it the guilds would pay rent, while remaining independent.

The Guild Socialists believed in organising society along functional lines. According to them, there should be 'as many separately elected groups of representatives as there are distinct and essential groups of functions to be performed.... Man should have as many distinctly and separately exercised votes as he has distinct social purposes or interests.' [G.D.HCole, *Self -Government in Industry* (1917), pp. 33-4]. Society, they believed, could not be truly democratic unless and until organised on a functional basis.

There was no agreement amongst Guild Socialists on the manner in which this dividing of social life into functions and establishment of occupational groups for each and every function could be brought about. There were differences also on whether the guilds should be organised on a local or national basis. On the whole, Guild Socialists tended to agree that the transition from capitalist society to the guild-socialist commonwealth must be principally through evolution—a natural and gradual process, though consciously steered. Economic, rather than political measures were emphasised by the Guild Socialists.

After World War I several working guilds were formed. However, the most powerful of these, the National Building Guild, collapsed in 1922, and thereafter the movement waned. The National Guilds League was dissolved in 1925. Nonetheless, it may be noted that during its existence it had considerable influence on British trade unions.

Even though the Guild Socialist movement was short-lived, its impact was significant. Trade unionists, socialists, post war Syndicalists, and empirical collectivists of various sorts came to accept Guild Socialist doctrines in their schemes for administration of nationalised industries and the control of private enterprise. Guild Socialist writers also influenced certain theorists particularly by suggesting or endorsing the pluralist's doctrine that freedom and equality, under the conditions of modern industry, can be secured only by extensively distributing power among a variety of generally autonomous working groups, each linked in performing a specific economic or cultural function in the service of the community.

1.7 Syndicalism

Syndicalism emerged as a social doctrine for workingmen in the late nineteenth century in France. The word 'Syndicalism' derived from 'syndicat'—the ordinary French term for labour union. While the main tenets of the doctrine appeared more or less independently in several countries, its most elaborate formulation was in France. The main elaboration of the idea took place in the hands of Pelloutier Victor Griffuelhes, Emile Pouget, Emile Patuad and Leon Jouhaux, Georges Sorel, Hubert Lagardelle and Edouard Berth.

The organisations through which the distinctive notions of Syndicalism were first put forth were the *'bourses du travail* or labour exchanges'. The first was established in Paris in 1887. Later, others were established in the provincial towns. While initially they were set up to work as employment agencies they soon took on social and educational functions. A national federation of bourses was formed in 1893. In 1895, largely under its initiative , a new and comprehensive national organisation of wage earners was formed. It was known as The General Federation of Labour (*Confederation Generale du Travail).* This organisation became the main national labour organisation in France.

The basic idea of Syndicalism was that the workers alone must control the conditions under which they work and live. The social changes they need can be achieved only by their own efforts, by direct action in their own associations and through means suited to their peculiar needs. The primary purpose was to raise the worker to that position of dignity and independence for which his function as a producer fitted him.

The Syndicalists referred to themselves as a ' new school ' of socialism. They neither favoured the reformists plans of conciliation, nor the orthodox socialists' schemes for a proletarian conquest of power through political methods. In fact, the Syndicalists were basically distrustful of political action. They believed that ordinary labour unions, organised by craft or industry , and local labour councils, together with the national federations and confederations of these bodies would be the proper agencies for conducting a working men's revolution and managing the affairs of the society after the revolution. So far as

tactics are concerned, they should be in the form of the working-men's 'direct action'—the strike, sabotage and boycott.

1.8 Scientific Socialism

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels are regarded as the founders of Scientific Socialism. Marxism, based on their teachings, has been viewed by Marxists as the 'scientific' study of concrete history; and hence termed as 'Scientific Socialism'. It is also referred to as 'revolutionary socialism'.

Karl Marx was born in the year 1818 in a German middle class family. He studied at the Universities of Bonn and Berlin and came under the influence of Hegelian philosophy at an early age. At the age of twentythree he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Writing for over three decades, Marx laid the foundations of Scientific Socialism—his ideas on social, historical, economic and political issues . He was the moving spirit in the formation of the first socialist 'International' in 1864 and remained thereafter the key personality in the socialist movement. Frederick Engels, who was the son of a wealthy manufacturer in Prussia, became famous as the friend , collaborator, benefactor and interpreter of Marx. Their friendship became lifelong. Many of the well known theoretical works on socialism were jointly undertaken by Marx and Engels. The clearest, most compact and popular statement of Marx and Engels on past struggles between economic classes, the modern bourgeois-proletarian conflict, the inevitable movement of present-day capitalism towards its own destruction, and the program of action that working men must adopt in order to fulfil their historic role and bring forth the inevitable transformation can be found in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party,* which was issued in 1848. It was prepared originally for the 'League of Communists' which was an association comprising of exiled working men. It is today the most widely read of all socialist documents and has been translated into many different languages.

Marx's direct influence on the practical movement of socialism was exercised chiefly through his part in the activities of the International Association of the Working Men, founded in 1864. Later known as the First International, it existed for twelve years. It was an association formed in London through the joint initiative of English trade unionists, leaders of radical labour groups in France and political refugees from other continental countries. It was designed mainly as a forum of interchange of ideas , promotion of cooperation and organising struggles for rights by workingmen across countries. Although the First International was weakened by both governmental interference and internal conflicts of opinion, it did succeed in bringing workmen's representatives together in large numbers and from a wider area than ever before; it also greatly strengthened the feeling of community of interest among workers of different nations.

Marx's theoretical works relating to socialism are scattered in a large number of books, pamphlets and letters.

'Scientific Socialism', developed by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, was based on the philosophy of Hegel, French revolutionary ideas, and study of the British Industrial Revolution. The development of this theory was Marx's lifelong obsession. Living in poverty, he worked and studied constantly in developing and proving his economic models, which he compiled, in his enormous three-volume work, *Capital*. All his life he dreamed of, and worked for, a socialist revolution.

In attempting to explain the laws of social development, Marx borrowed the concept of Dialectics from Hegel. He used the dialectics to support a theory of social progress in which a higher social order was necessarily realised. Dialectics is 'the theory of the union of opposites.' Hegel used it in the field of ideas, Marx applied it to matter—thus modifying the Hegelian version.

One of the cardinal principles of Marxian philosophy is the Materialist Interpretation of History. Economic conditions were seen as the prime movers of history. It was pointed out that in every society the forces of production determined the relations of production and the interaction patterns of the social classes. The forces of production and the relations of production together constitute the economic foundations of any society. On this sub-structure the superstructure, comprising of the non-material aspects of the society, namely, its laws, religion, art, culture, etc., are built.

History, as seen by Marx and his followers, is the history of class struggles. In every society there are predominantly two main classes, the owners of the means of production and those who do not own the means of production. The former are the exploiters , the latter the exploited. It is through the process of class struggles between these two classes that societal transformation takes place. As the productive forces change, new classes emerge , but class struggle remains a reality. It takes place, now amongst the new set of classes.

In a capitalist society, Marx noted the presence of two main contending classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie own the means of production and employ the workers, the proletariat, who own nothing except their ability to work. The bourgeoisie extracts surplus from the labour of the proletariat and thereby adds to its own profits.

The natural course of evolution of human society under conditions was clear to Marx. As the proletariat becomes more and more exploited and impoverished and as it grows in size, the wealth of the world aggregates increasingly in fewer hands. Ultimately, in such a situation, the working class would rise up in revolution and throw out the bourgeoisie.The birth of a new social order, socialism, would thus be heralded. A period of dictatorship by the proletariat would be necessary to establish order, but afterwards the state would slowly wither away. Once the state ceased to exist in any meaningful form, pure communism would be in place, fostering an age of cooperation and socio-economic equality for the first time in human history. Private property would cease to exist and the workers would break their metaphorical chains, no longer bound to anyone.

Marx never lived to see a Communist, Marxist revolution. The Russian Revolution of 1917 is usually the first that comes to mind when searching for examples of revolutions as Marx foresaw them. The success of the Russian Revolution of 1917 showed the first examples

of Marx's spirit, if not his complete ideology, triumphing against an established government. This triumph created the first officially socialist state in the history of the world, with Vladimir Illich Ulyanov, known to history as Lenin, at its helm. Though Lenin accepted most of Marx's ideology, he altered some of his theories and added much to them as well.

Lenin was born Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov on 9 April 1870 in Russia. Alongside his revolutionary activities, Lenin's theoretical contributions to the development of Marxism were significant. Some of his well known books and pamphlets include - *What is to be Done ? (1902), Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution (1905), Materialism and Empirico-criticism (1909), Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism (1916), State and Revolution (1918), Leftwing Communism (1920).*

Lenin's important contributions to Marxist theory lay in the field of revolutionary strategy and tactics, role of the Party, and capitalism and imperialism. Lenin elaborated on Marx's ideas about the state's role in a communist economy. He also developed the idea of the vanguard party. Lenin wrote extensively on the political implications of socialism and communism, public policy, capitalist theory, and imperialism. One of his best known works is *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism* . In it, Lenin elaborated on how at an advanced stage capitalism would result in imperialism.

Marxism's analytical approach, using history and philosophy, differed sharply from the previous socialist views of Utopian societies brought about through cooperative, peaceful efforts. The proponents of Marxism advanced the belief that the economy influences historical development.

1.9 Arguments Against Socialism

The most commonly heard arguments against socialism are as follows:

i) The socialist prescriptions are, by and large, in their extreme form impracticable both on account of economic compulsions and the basics of human nature.

ii) Socialism tends to support mediocrity rather than industry, hard work and efficiency.

iii) Socialists over-estimate the capacity of the state.

iv) The system of collective ownership and limitations on private accumulation operate as disincentives to individual efforts,

v) Socialism compels the able and industrious to share the fruits of their labour with the idle and stupid—a bias which is neither prudent nor justifiable,

vi) Socialists make the state do work for which it is not suited,

vii) The socialist doctrine that each man should be rewarded according to his labour is understood to mean simply work with ones hands and fails to give due value to capital or skills,

viii) Socialism pampers the workers and seeks to invest the working classes with privileges they have no right to enjoy,

ix) Socialism contradicts sound principles of economics. Providing all the necessities

of life to people of a populous state, managing the labour and distributing the products is a task which no government can satisfactorily perform,

x) The basics of socialism run counter to human nature; as such, without fundamental changes in human nature socialism is unlikely to succeed,

xi) Critics argue that any attempt to install and sustain a socialist form of society must inevitably rest on regimentation,

xii) Withdrawal of private incentive under socialism would, it is argued, result in a decline in the quality and quantity of production,

xiii) Herbert Spencer in 'The Coming Slavery' and J..S. .Mill in 'Political Economy' had both opined that socialism would involve not an enlargement of individual freedom, but a restriction of it and would lead to a deterioration of individual character.

1.10 Arguments in Favour of Socialism

i) It is only under a socialist system that a toiling man gets his dues. The value of his labour is not expropriated by others.

ii) Socialism is based on the principle of justice and right.

iii) The system of unrestricted competition under capitalism leads to overproduction, decline in wages, cheap goods and unemployed workers. Socialism abolishes these by means of abolishing competition and introducing the principle of cooperation.

iv) Socialism is the economic complement of democracy,

v) It is in keeping with ethical and altruistic principles,

vi) It is the only system under which full and harmonious development of individual character can be realised,

vii) Socialists view the state as an organic unit and not merely as an aggregation of isolated individuals. As such, rights and duties are inextricably linked in the socialist system.

1.11 Summary

Socialism emerged in Europe during the period of industrialization in the eighteenth century as a critique of capitalism and the Laissez Faire doctrine. It aimed at bringing to an end the intense exploitation of labour as it was growing in the context of industrial production. There are different schools of socialist thought revealing divergences of opinions regarding both the goal as well as the methods for establishing a socialist society. The most prominent in the modern context is the Marxist school or that which is known as 'Scientific Socialism'. The earliest and nearest attempt of its application was in the context of the establishment of the erstwhile Soviet Union. The collapse of the state marked a setback in terms of practical attempts at establishing socialism, but was not a negation of socialist

idcology per se. Marxism has been variedly interpreted over the years; it has inspired the creation of endless numbers of activist groups, as well as countless trade groups around the world. Marxism is still very much alive today, though perhaps not in the form that Marx imagined it.

1.12 Sample Questions

Long answer type questions

1. Discuss the basic tenets of Utopian Socialism.
2. Examine the contributions of Fabian Socialists.
3. Critically examine the main arguments levelled against socialism.

Short answer type questions

1. Summarize Robert Owen's efforts in promoting socialism.
2. What were the basic principles of Syndicalism ?
3. In what respects did Lenin modify Marxism ?

Objective questions

1. Who was the author of *Utopia ?*
2. When was the Fabian Society established ?
3. In which country did Guild Socialism emerge ?

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Unit 2 ❐ Anarchism

Structure

2.1 Objectives

This Unit will help us to understand–

- The meaning of Anarchism as a political philosophy
- The history of the rise of Anarchist philosophy
- The different strands of Anarchist thought
- The contributions and limitations of Anarchism

2.2 Defining Anarchism

Anarchism is a term given to a political philosophy advocating a society without "the state", and often the overthrow, violent or otherwise, of the current system of government. As Benjamin Tucker put it, Anarchism is the philosophy that "all the affairs of men should be managed by individuals or voluntary associations, and that the state should be abolished."

Anarchism is often referred to as a doctrine that opposes state power and authority. This is indeed a simplistic presentation , and fails to explain the complexities of its theoretical position.

The classical Anarchists shared common ground with a surprisingly wide variety of political views. Like classical liberals, they viewed the state as frequently burdensome and potentially oppressive of individual rights. Like socialists, including Marx, they opposed the exploitative capitalist economic system. And like some conservatives, they considered small local communities the ideal locus of social and political life. These apparently eclectic views have led some commentators to regard Anarchism as an ad hoc mingling of fashionable positions; or, worse, an inherently confused jumble because of the internal tensions between the incompatible goals of liberalism, socialism, and conservatism.

Anarchism has been defined in many ways by many different sources. The word Anarchism is taken from the word Anarchy which is drawn from dual sources in the Greek language. It is made up of the Greek words 'av' (meaning: absence of [and pronounced "an"] and 'apxn' (meaning: authority or government [and pronounced "arkhe"]). Today, dictionary definitions still define Anarchism as the absence of government. These modern dictionary definitions of Anarchism are based on the writings and actions of Anarchists of history and the present. Anarchists understand, as do historians of Anarchism and good dictionaries and encyclopedias, that the word Anarchism represents a positive theory.

A leading modern dictionary, Webster's *Third International Dictionary,* defines Anarchism briefly as, "a political theory opposed to all forms of government and governmental restraint and advocating voluntary cooperation and free association of individuals and groups in order to satisfy their needs." Certain other dictionaries also describe Anarchism in similar fashion. The Britannica-Webster dictionary defines the word Anarchism as, "a political theory that holds all government authority to be unnecessary and undesirable and advocates a society based on voluntary cooperation of individuals and groups." Shorter dictionaries, such as the *New Webster Handy College Dictionary,* however, prefer to define Anarchism as, "the political doctrine that all governments should be abolished."

As per the *Cambridge Paperback Encyclopaedia,* Anarchism is " a generic term for political ideas and movements that reject the state and other forms of authority and coercion in favour of a society based exclusively upon voluntary cooperation between individuals."

According to Noam Chomsky, "...Anarchism isn't a doctrine. It's at most a historical tendency, a tendency of thought and action, which has many different ways of developing and progressing and which, I would think, will continue as a permanent strand of human history."

Anarchism, because of the threat it imposes upon established authority, has been historically, and is still, condemned by power holders as being synonymous with violence and chaos. As Anarchist historian George Woodcock put it, "Of the more frivolous is the idea that the Anarchist is a man who throws bombs and wishes to wreck society by violence and terror. That this charge should be brought against Anarchists now, at a time when they are the few people who are not throwing bombs or assisting bomb throwers, shows a curious purblindness among its champions." The claim that Anarchism is chaos was refuted long ago by Alexander Berkman when he wrote:

> I must tell you, first of all, what Anarchism is not. It is not bombs, disorder, or chaos. It is not robbery or murder. It is not a war of each against all. It is not a return to barbarianism or to the wild state of man. Anarchism is the very opposite of all that.

2.3 A Historical Outline of Anarchist Thought

The roots of Anarchism go back into the ancient past. In the Graeco-Roman world, questions pertaining to the efficacy of political institutions were raised. The Stoics of ancient Greece had questioned the efficacy of political institutions and advocated "social conditions in which men are able to act freely in response to natural instincts of sociability and justice".

In the Middle Ages, some religious sects propagated the idea that Christianity was capable of sustaining a free and fair civil life, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe anti-monarchist ideas were in a sense the precursors of more structured subsequent anarchist ideas. The doctrines of natural rights placing limits on state authority, economic individualism as developed in the writings of Adam Smith, as also socialist doctrines form the more recent sources of anarchist philosophy.

Anarchism grew slowly, but attracted a very devoted and vocal group of people. In the second half of the eighteenth century, it began to have a noticeable effect on society. Artists, writers, workers, artisans, etc. across society were found to be taking up the cause. Some revolutionaries and political leaders also began to take up the flag of Anarchy. By the second half of the nineteenth century Anarchism came into distinct prominence.

William Godwin developed the first distinctively Anarchist political theory, one which contains virtually all the elements found in the succeeding works of Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin. But Godwin's theory was not only the first; it was also the most philosophically profound and adept. He presented a detailed and sophisticated view of moral ideals and the good life which provides a stable grounding for the details of the theory.

Godwin was born in 1756 in Weisbech, the capital of North Cambridgeshire. He later married feminist Mary Wollstonecraft and had a daughter, Mary Shelley—who was to become the author of Frankenstein. Godwin published a book called *Political Justice* in 1793. In it was first introduced his ideas about Anarchism. Godwin was forgotten about, however, and after his death Pierre Joseph Proudhon became a leading Anarchist figure in the world.

Anarchism fully blossomed as a defined theory when Russian Anarchists Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876) and Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) started to write and speak. Bakunin had a major influence in the world and introduced Anarchism to many people. Kropotkin was one of the many people inspired by Bakunin. Kropotkin wrote many books on Anarchism, including *Mutual Aid, Fields Factories and Workshops,* and *The Conquest of Bread,* and greatly aided in the evolution of the theory of Anarchism. Kropotkin wrote the first adept encyclopedia definition of Anarchism in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in 1910. His definition was fifteen pages long. He started the definition by introducing the word Anarchism as:

> ...the name given to a principle of theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government—harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of the needs and aspirations of a civilized being.

Following Kropotkin, Leo Tolstoy furthered the ideas which make up the meaning of the word Anarchism. Tolstoy introduced Christian Anarchism (rejecting church authority but believing in God) and broadened Anarchism's meaning. Tolstoy, in favour of the growth of Anarchism, wrote, "The Anarchists are right in the assertion that, without Authority, there could not be worse violence than that of Authority under existing conditions."

As the 20th century emerged Anarchism began to peak and the definition of Anarchism became concrete with the growth of new Anarchist writers and movements. The execution

and imprisonment of eight Anarchists in Chicago in 1886 sparked Anarchism's growth in the United States.

Anarchism was sought to be put into action by movements throughout history. The communal efforts of Anarchism were seen in the Paris Commune in the early 19th century, the revolutionary organizing of Mexican working class rebels was proven possible by Anarchists such as Ricardo Flores Magon and revolutionaries like Emiliano Zapata, and the Spanish Revolution of 1936-39 proved Anarchists' capability of creating Anarchism within small sectors of the world.

Modern Anarchists still work hard to help Anarchism maintain its validity and history. Anarchism today is being used to find solutions to the problems of power; not just state power, but corporate power and all immediate forms of domination among individuals and organizations. Anarchists like L. Susan Brown have introduced ideas such as existential individualism, while other Anarchists remain loyal to anarcho-Syndicalism and class struggle. Anarchism has also been spread around the world through music and bands such as Crass, introducing Anarchism and urging self-sufficiency among workers and community members. Other Anarchists such as Lorenzo KonVboa Ervin, an ex-Black Panther, are introducing new means of organizing and directly challenging racism. Furthermore, Anarchism has become integrated into ecological issues thanks in part to eco-Anarchist ideas and freethinking organizations such as Earth First. Also, we see Anarchists working to keep Anarchism, in theory and practice, alive and well around the world with Anarchist newspapers such as *Love* and *Rage* in Mexico and the United States, Anarchist book publishers such as AK Press in the U.S. and the U.K., and political prisoner support groups such as the Anarchist Black Cross.

2.4 Anarchist Schools of Thought

From William Godwin's free society, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's mutualism to Max Stirner's individualism, the roots of Anarchist thought were always varied, with many different views of what a society without government should be like. Most prominent amongst the Anarchist schools of thought have been the individualist Anarchists and the revolutionary or communist Anarchists.

Individualists, taking much from the writings of Stirner, among others, demanded the utmost respect for the liberty of the individual. Max Stirner was a German. His real name was Johanu Kasper Schmidt. To him, the individual was the only reality. Whatever man does is prompted by self-interest and pleasure. The state is unnatural as , in the name of common interest it represses the individual. Stirner did not believe in insurrection or violence as the means for abolishing the state. Instead, he preferred to rely on protest, disobedience, scorn and ridicule.

Amongst the American individualistic Anarchists the names of Josiah Warren (1799-1874) and Benjamin R. Tucker (b. 1854) are prominent. Warren upheld the universal natural law of self preservation. He contended that man suffered because of the evils perpetrated by the institutions of private property and coercive government; hence, these institutions should be done away with. In place of these institutions, he recommended the setting up of a council of experts who would rely on persuasion and not coercion.

Benjamin R. Tucker believed that 'liberty is the most effective agency of order as well as the chief ingredient of happiness.' Interference in such liberty was considered by him to be 'invasion'. And, he accused the state to be most guilty of such invasion. Taxation, administration of justice, military protection, etc all pointed to such 'invasion.'. Tucker sought to replace the state with voluntary associations where individuals would freely join and freely leave.

Revolutionary or communist Anarchists advocated revolutionary and evolutionary methods for bringing about the Anarchist transformation of society. The best known exponents of this strand of Anarchism were the two Russian thinkers, Michael Bakunin (1814 -1876) and Prince Peter Kropotkin (1842 -1921). In fact, it may be rightly stated that the most systematic and thoroughgoing Anarchist doctrines in modern times appear in their writings.

Anarchist communists like Michael Bakunin and Prince Peter Kropotkin built on the Marxist critique of capitalism and synthesised it with their own critique of the state, developing a view of society where the fate of the individual was tied to that of society.

The goals of revolutionary Anarchists, in the opinion of Bakunin, were most importantly

1. universal popular education
2. liberation
3. broad development of social life

and, as such, the Anarchists were, he pointed out, 'enemies of the state and of any form of statehood'.

Prince Kropotkin revealed a scientific temper and sought to give an evolutionary and historical basis to his analyses. He believed that in studying man and society the methods of the natural sciences would have to be adopted. He himself was a student of biology and human geography and in his Anarchistic propositions the impact of these were evident. The laws of natural evolution, he believed applied equally to men and animals. They define the processes of an increasing adaptation to surrounding conditions of life. Individuals and species which survive are those which are endowed with the most effective faculties for cooperation in the struggles to adapt themselves to their environment and those in which the competitive qualities predominate over the cooperative are those which ultimately disappear. The hindrances to the attainment of the natural goal of human progress were the state, private property and also religious authorities. The state , he contended, had neither natural nor historical justification and was opposed to man's cooperative instincts.

Anarcho-syndicalism developed as the industrialised form of this libertarian communism, emphasising industrial actions, especially the general strike, as the primary strategy to achieve Anarchist revolution, and 'build the new society in the shell of the old'.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, two new schools of thought developed in North America: namely, anarcho-capitalism and primitivism. Anarcho-capitalism built on the classical liberal tradition, took the distrust of government further and claimed that free markets could provide justice and security; as such, the state was not required, its intervention was harmful. Primitivists like John Zerzan proclaimed that civilisation — not just the state — would need to be abolished to create liberty and a just social order.

Pacifism, referring to opposition to the practice of war, is considered by most Anarchists to be inherent in their philosophy. Some Anarchists take it further and follow Leo Tolstoy's belief in non-violence (note, however, that these anarcho-pacifists are not necessarily Christian

Anarchists as Tolstoy was), advocating non-violent resistance as the only method of achieving a truly Anarchist revolution.

Governments cracked down hard on the Anarchists. America passed an Act in 1902 banning the entrance into the country of those declaring themselves to be Anarchists. Mussolini eliminated all Anarchist groups through the most brutal tactics. Hitler did the same. The leaders of the Russian Revolution of 1917 were disinterested in Anarchism and brushed aside most of its ideas. From Italy to America to Japan, Anarchist groups and movements were crushed; individuals imprisoned or killed. Though only a tiny fraction of Anarchists preached violence (many were actually pacifists) they were all demonized in the eyes of the public. Even though Anarchism still attracts a following today among free thinkers and academics around the world, its time as a real movement, attempting to affect change at the most basic levels of society, however, seems to have passed.

2.5 Assessing Anarchism

Critics of Anarchism have pointed out that -

- Anarchism is basically unrealistic and as such, can hardly be taken seriously.
- The Anarchists emphasis solely on man's cooperative instinct is based on a flawed reading of human nature. The reality is that man not only cooperates with each other, but also competes. Conflict is as much a social reality as cooperation. But Anarchists fail to suitably reckon with it.
- Anarchists fail to reckon with the fact that liberty is by its very nature limited. We cannot have unlimited liberty. One person cannot enjoy liberty without there being restrictions on the others' liberty.
- Anarchism glosses over the positive role that a state may be geared to perform in terms of social reform and restructuring.
- It is stronger as a critique of the state but its projection of an alternative remains hazy.
- Moreover, anarchist fail to adequately reckon with the complex contradictions evident in any society. The fact that interests conflict and do not run parallel to one another is overlooked by most of the Anarchists.
- Anarchism rests on the belief that human beings are always guided by reason and logic. Yet reality is frequently otherwise.

Despite these limitations however, the positive contributions of Anarchist thought should be given due recognition. Most importantly, Anarchists draw our attention to the lurking dangers of the all powerful state, the need to limit the powers of the state and recognise the importance of liberty for the individual's development and well being. The Anarchists rightly point out the importance of cooperation, freedom and rational persuasion in social interactions.

In general, Anarchism symbolises protest against the centralisation of political power, coercion, increasing mechanisation of life and restrictions on freedom. It stands out in defence of federalism, regionalism, cultural diversity and the flourishing of voluntary

associations. While as a political doctrine Anarchism has failed to make its dent, the philosophical influence of Anarchism remains even now. This is evident from the fact that Anarchist organisations continue to exist across the globe and , in fact in recent years, amid the rise in protest against globalisation, Anarchism has gained a higher profile.

2.6 Sample Questions

Anarchism is often referred to simply as opposition to state power, a negation of all authority. This is hardly a justified presentation of Anarchism. It stands for much else than mere opposition to all authority. Efforts to understand the theoretical structure of Anarchism is not only important but difficult. The existence of varied strands of Anarchist thought make the understanding of Anarchism all the more difficult. Its opposition to the state and for that matter, any form of coercive authority, makes it a widely, and often unjustly, criticised theory. Unfolding in the late eighteenth century, Anarchism still finds a following in different quarters, particularly in the anti-war and environmentalist lobbies.

2.7 Sample Questions

Broad Questions

1. Explain the basic philosophy of Anarchism.
2. Trace the evolution of the course of Anarchist thought.
3. Identify the main strands of Anarchist thought and highlight their viewpoints.

Short questions

1. Explain the logic of the Anarchists refusal to obey the commands of the state.
2. What according to Michael Bakunin are the goals of revolutionary Anarchists?
3. What are the positive contributions of Anarchist philosophy?

Objective questions

1. From what language source is the word Anarchy drawn?
2. To which Anarchist school of thought did Kropotkin belong?
3. Who was the first to develop a distinctively Anarchist political theory?

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- Michael Rosen and Jonathan Wolff ed., *Political Thought* .
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- Amal Ray and Mohit Bhattacharya, *Political Theory : Ideas and Institutions*

Unit 3 ◻ Revolution

Structure

3.1 Objectives

After having read this Unit, you should be able to: -

- Understand the meaning of the word 'revolution'
- Identify the common causes of revolutions
- Comprehend the goals of revolutions
- Know about the different theories of revolutions
- Assess the Marxist perspective on revolutions

3.2 What is a Revolution?

At the very outset of our discussion we need to understand what Revolution means. In simple terms, it means a total radical transformation. It could be in relation to any area of functioning; we could speak of a revolution , for example, in the field of medicine, Physics, Chemistry, Genetics and so on. We could also speak of revolution in terms of social or political systems, or even as an inter-linked process.

We should remember that change is inherent in all societies at all times. Or in other words, no social order is ever static. The nature and pace of change, however, varies. Under normal conditions, the continuous change is almost imperceptibly absorbed. But there are times when this is not possible. Those are the times when revolutions occur. There are occasions in the history of a people when the rate of change is sharply accelerated and adjustments are attempted with rapidity and urgency. All changes impose a strain on the existing system in so far as departure from existing practices and institutions are called for, but excessive speed could make the strain intolerable and lead the society to a point of

breakdown. The most profound changes call for a refashioning of the main structural pillars on which society reposes. Thus, the most extreme changes are revolutions. In a political sense , when one group takes over power from another within the framework of the same constitutional system and by a procedure constitutionally defined and mutually accepted, there is no revolution. But, when the constitution and the government are reconstructed , a revolution is said to occur. If apart from constitutional renovation, radical social transformation is effected, the revolution is more thorough-going in character. The most prominent revolutions which have taken place over the last three hundred years include the American Revolution from 1775-1789, involving a change of government and constitution, the English Revolution between 1640- 1688 altering both the constitution and the government and settling issues of church - state relations and confirming the prominence of a new urban commercial class, the French Revolution which began in 1789 went further than the English in terms of economic, political and cultural ferment that was evoked throughout the society, and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917 which brought form one of the most penetrating and intensive overhauls of a social order of which history has records.

The *WordNet Dictionary* defines Revolution as -

[n] the overthrow of a government by those who are governed

[n] a drastic and far-reaching change in ways of thinking and behaving; "the industrial revolution was also a cultural revolution."

Definitions have often been descriptive or synthetic. That is to say, they have started by describing what the term revolution has actually come to mean. Quoting Karl Griewank, E.J.Hobsbawm in "Revolution" [in Rosemary H.T.Oltane ed., *Revolution: Critical Concepts in Political Science,* Vol. 1, Rouuedge, London, 2000, p. 85] writes :

> Hitherto revolution has come to be used quite unambiguously only for certain total historical phenomena which combine three features. First, a process which is both violent and in the nature of a sudden shock—a breaking through or overturning, especially as regards changes in the institutions of state and law. Second, a social content, which appears in the movement of groups and masses, and generally also in actions of open resistance by these. Finally, the intellectual form of a programmatic idea or ideology, which sets up positive objectives aiming at renovation, further development or the progress of humanity.

To this, Hobsbawm adds the importance of mass mobilization of which he mentions that without it 'few historians would identify a revolution as such.'

Hannah Arendt in *On Revolution,* [New York, 1963] observed, : "For revolution, however one may be tempted to define them, are not mere changes." Starting from this point, Chalmers Johnson in "Revolution and the Social System", brings to focus the fact that "Revolution is a form of change within the social system; not *mere* change, but change nonetheless."

John Dunn [Modern Revolutions, Cambridge University Press, London, 1972, p. 3] had written, "revolutions are facts of nature, analogous to physical processes, the release of enormous forces, moving vast masses through space. They are amoral, ineluctable. They

crush all in their path.... It is pointless to resist them and absurd, as Danton said, to put them on trial."

Revolutions almost invariably reveal two sides. One, the elegant , the abstract , the humanitarian vision or dream of what the future post-revolution reality is to hold out. The other is crude, violent, concrete and somewhat nightmarish.

All revolutions by definition imply the failure of the ruling forces to rule. Yet, it is also true to say that mere are many more situations where the ruling classes fail to maintain political control, yet successful revolutions do not take place.

3.3 Why do Revolutions Occur?

Why do revolutions occur is a question inextricably linked to the issue of definitions.

Crane Brinton. in *The Anatomy of Revolution* (1965), sought to develop a theory of revolution by taking note of the uniformities in the cases of four revolutions : The English (1640), American (1776), French (1789) and Russian (1917). In essence his formulation was as follows -

- Fiscal crises makes governments inefficient
- The inefficiency frustrates an important group's aspirations for advancement
- Discontent follows
- The discontented are politicised by processes of desertion of intellectuals and mobilisation
- Government attempts reforms, but unsuccessfully
- Class conflicts intensify
- Splits occur in the ruling class on the question of coping with the crisis
- Governmental functioning becomes increasingly inconsistent, adding to the crisis
- At this stage, according to Brinton, revolution is 'in the air'. People actually 'talk about it' and then the revolution occurs.

Louis Gottschalk in "Causes of Revolution", noted that revolutions occur because of -

> "(1) a demand for change, which is itself the result of (a) widespread provocation and (b) solidified public opinion; and (2) a hopefulness of change, which is itself the result of (a) a popular programme and (b) trusted leadership. All these four factors , however, even when they act together, cannot by themselves create revolution. They are only the remote causes of revolution..... the most important of the five causes of revolution the weakness of the conservative forces. This is the necessary immediate cause of revolution."

Ted Gurr in *Why Men Rebel* (1970) noted that the widespread perception of relative deprivation leads to discontent which tends to lead to politicisation of discontent, which tends to lead to political violence.

Charles Tilly [*From Mobilisation to Revolution,* (1978)] and Theda Skocpol *[States and Social Revolutions* (1979)] had noted the importance of factors such as weakening of the

state, development of widespread opposition, role of organisation and opportunity in the triumph of the revolutionary forces. But, alongside, instead of concentrating merely on statistical indicators, they were keen on developing the understanding of the detailed historical conditions under which these factors emerged.

Chalmers Johnson's important work of relevance has been *Revolutionary Change*. It was published in 1966, a year after the publication of Brinton's *The Anatomy of Revolution*. He viewed revolutions as 'anti-social' events which occur in a society where the harmony of values is no longer in existence. In other words, there has developed a dis-equilibrium in such a system. The revolutions occur and eventually succeed simply because the political leadership has failed to perform its tasks.

Revolutions, according to Johnson, need not occur, and need not succeed.

According to Lenin 'revolutions are made at moments of particular upsurge and the exertion of all human capacities, by the class consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of millions, spurred on by a most acute struggle of classes.'

[*Left Wing Communism : An Infantile Disorder*].

To him, the fundamental law of revolution is as follows:

> It is not enough for revolution that the exploited and oppressed masses should understand the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes, it is essential for revolution that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. Only when the 'lower classes' do not want the old way, and when the 'upper classes' cannot carry on in the old way—only then can revolution triumph.

The legitimacy of revolutionary elite in the process of struggle comes from their claim to be able to solve some of the problems of their societies.

Jack Goldstone (*Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 1991) had, in tracing the origins of revolutions , identified three critical elements the combination of which he believed, led to revolutions. The first was a crisis of state resources. The second was that of elite disunity and alienation from the state which leads elites to respond to the state crisis by fragmenting into factions, each seeking to control the government. Thirdly, there is a high level of mass mobilisation potential. When all these three occurred at once, Goldstone predicted that a revolutionary crisis would develop.

3.4 Theories of Revolutions

Revolutions are categorized by political and social scientists on the basis of certain criteria that are most commonly as follows:

- Objectives of revolution
- Number and nature of participants
- Strategies and tactics adopted
- Duration

- Extent of mass participation
- Levels of ideological commitment

Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan categorises revolution into three categories - palace revolution, political revolution and social revolution. Samuel Huntington identified four types of wars: internal wars, revolutionary coup, reform coup, and palace coup.

Michael Freeman in a review article on theories of revolution published in the *British Journal of Political Science* in 1972, noted that the history of the theory of revolution corresponded to the phases in the history of Political Science. The first phase is that of the classical theorists from Plato to Marx. The second phase is from Marx to Weber, a period when scholars were chasing value free knowledge and building empirical theories. Prominent names during this period were Sorokin, Edwards, Pettee and Brinton. The third phase in Political Science signified a trend towards 'functionalism' and 'quantification' which in turn had an impact on the theory of revolution.

Jack A.Goldstone has differentiated four 'generations' of scholarly research on revolutions. The first generation scholars, from 1900-1940, were mainly descriptive in their approach and their explanations of the phenomena of revolutions were usually related to social psychology. For example, Charles A. Ellwood or Pitirim Sorokin.The second generation theorists came up between 1940 - 1975. They sought to develop detailed theories of why and when revolutions arise. Their analyses were grounded in more complex social behaviour theories, adopting approaches that were psychological, sociological and political. Amongst them were Ted Robert Gurr, Chalmers Johnson, Neil Smelser, Charles Tilly, Samuel P. Huntington. The third generation of theorists as Goldstone claimed, came into existence by the critics of the second generation thinkers from 1975, and among the major thinkers holding the same view are Paige, Trimberger, Theda Skocpol and Eisentstadt.

From the late 1980s a new body of scholarly work began questioning the dominance of the third generation's theories. The old theories were also dealt a significant blow by new revolutionary events that could not be easily explained by them.

3.5 The Marxian Theory of Revolution

The Marxian theory of Revolution is perhaps the most coherent of revolutionary thinking till date. The inhumane nature of nineteenth century capitalist production had made Marx devote his entire life's energy to the struggling for the overthrow of capitalism. His focus on revolutions was perhaps shaped by the fact that early and mid-nineteenth century Europe was constantly fought over by revolutionaries and reactionaries.

In Marxian thinking, the idea of the revolutionary transformation of society occupied a prominent place. The stage by stage transformation of society would be brought about by revolutionary means. A bourgeois revolution would overthrow feudalism leading to the establishment of capitalism. This phase would be marked by class struggle which with growing intensification would ultimately lead to the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist

society and set the ground for the establishment of socialism with an intervening period of dictatorship of the proletariat.

Although according to the Marxian schema, the natural phases of evolution would ensure that the proletariat would one day hold the dominant place in society, Marx advocated a programme of revolutionary action as well. The revolution that would overthrow the capitalist class was considered to be unique when compared to other revolutions. It would be a revolution which would bring the oppressed majority to power. The inevitable social revolution that Marx spoke of was intended to end all exploitation and social inequality. In fact, it could be said that Marx's philosophy was conceived by him as providing a plan and a motive for a social revolution that should free the workers from poverty and exploitation. The revolution would be the inevitable outcome of the class struggle. The capture of the state by the proletariat would be the first task of the revolution. With the capture of state power , however, an immediate switch-over to a communist society would not be possible. An intervening period of dictatorship of the proletariat would be necessary. During such a period *the* minds of men were to be purged of the remnants of the capitalist mentality with which they were infected.

The Marxian idea of revolution was further developed by Lenin. In fact, this was one of the major areas of his contributions to Marxist thought. His main concern was the Russian scenario and, in theorising in that context, he developed the Marxian revolutionary strategy. Lenin in his *Two Tactics* written in 1905, proposed a 'revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.'

In the revolutionary struggle , Lenin accorded the revolutionary party a leading role. It was to play the role of the vanguard, the sole spokesman of the proletariat, and bring revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat. The basis of the party organisation would be 'democratic centralism'—'democratic' , because party members would have the opportunity of discussing all policies prior to the finalisation of the decisions, and 'centralism' in so far as the decision once arrived at the higher levels of the chain of command would be binding on all members down the line. It is this hierarchically structured party that would lead the revolution.

It would not be an overstatement if we say that, it was through the Russians that the Chinese found Marxism. In fact, it was the October Revolution which had impact on the Chinese. The success of the Bolsheviks in overthrowing the Russian autocracy inspired many progressive Chinese intellectuals to follow suit. A general disillusionment with Western ideals led the Chinese intelligentsia to turn increasingly towards Marxism. The Chinese Communist Party was founded in Shanghai in 1921 and Mao Zedong was one of the thirteen members present.

Mao Zedong was born in 1893 in Shaoshan in the Hunan province of South Central China. Initially Mao became a radical nationalist, and subsequently a Marxist to lead the Communist Party to victory in China.

Maoism can be considered as a synthesis of Leninism and certain traditional Chinese ideas. Some of the most important aspects of Maoism are:

First, the focus on the peasantry. The Chinese Communist Party was built up primarily as a peasant party. And, in the revolutionary struggle active cooperation of the peasantry was deemed to be essential.

Secondly, Maoism emphasised the importance of consciousness. Marxism was essentially a doctrine of the proletariat and it was therefore deemed necessary to instill a proletarian or social consciousness into the peasantry. The telescoping of the capitalist phase into the socialist phase meant the enhancement of the process. Hence the idea of the Cultural Revolution.

Third, were Mao's doctrine on guerrilla warfare, evolved in the 1930s. In fact, the most important contributions of Mao to the theory and practice of Marxism were his views on guerrilla tactics and the strategy to be adopted in a lengthy struggle against a militarily superior opponent. His most important writings on the subject include *Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War Against Japan* and *On Protracted War.* Both of these were written in 1938.

We must remember that the Marxian theory of revolution does not deal exclusively with any particular country or even a group of countries; the revolutionary conditions are expected to develop everywhere, sooner or later. Also, the Marxist theory is international in another sense. That is, for the first time, social, political and economic conditions everywhere in the world are seen as connected to the developments everywhere else. In other words, while considering revolution from a Marxian angle, one cannot ignore the international system.

3.6 Summary

Revolutions signify a total transformation. They have been occurring to affect human society from the very early days of societal existence and have been variedly defined. Scholars have attempted to understand revolutions. In so doing, they have tried to classify revolutions and build typologies of revolutions. Revolutionaries on their part have sought to promote revolutions and in the course of it , theorised in their own respective styles. Goals and methods of revolutions have been varied. One of the most elaborately structured theories of revolutions has been the Marxian theory of revolution which calls for detailed analyses.

3.7 Sample Questions

Long answer type questions

1. What are the factors which commonly lead to revolutions ?
2. How do revolutions affect society ?
3. Explain the Marxian theory of Revolution.

Short answer type questions

1. What is meant by a 'revolution'?
2. How can revolutions be categorized ?
3. Write a note on Lenin's ideas on revolution.

Objective type questions

1. What, according to Tedd Gurr, leads to political violence ?
2. Who was the author of *Two Tactics* ?
3. Who contributed significantly to the development of the tactics of guerrilla warfare as a part of Marxian strategy ?

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Unit 4 ❐ Totalitarianism

Structure

4.1 Objectives

This Unit will enable us to–

- Understand the historical context of the development of Totalitarianism
- Comprehend what Totalitarianism is all about
- Outline the features of Totalitarian systems
- Understand the controversies associated with the concept of totalitarianism
- Consider the distinction between totalitarianism and authoritarianism

4.2 Introduction : Totalitarianism in Historical Perspective

Totalitarianism emerged after World War 1. As a concept it has however remained elusive and hard to define. It has often been used in a rather general and value loaded sense without recourse to necessary clarity of analysis.

Although totalitarianism has often been referred to as a form of dictatorship, it is no ordinary dictatorship. It goes well beyond the traditional dictatorship. In a totalitarian system, the powers of the state know no bounds. The state engulfs all. It resorts to constant indoctrination achieved by propaganda to erase any potential for dissent, by anyone, including most especially the agents of government.

It can at most be considered as an unique and extreme form of dictatorship.

The word totalitarianism appears to have originated in Italy. According to some scholars it came into the Italian language from French. However, French philological dictionaries claim that it reached the French language from Italian.

Mussolini had first used the word in a speech on 22 June, 1925. There, attacking remnants of opposition in the Chamber, he had spoken of 'La nostra feroce volunta totalitaria. i.e.

'our' [i.e., the Fascists] fierce totalitarian will'. Earlier, on 8th March in the same year, Giovanni Gentile, the philosopher who was to become the official philosopher of Fascist theory had used the term in describing Fascism as a total conception of life. In the course of the next few years the word became a favourite with Mussolini and he frequently described the system which he claimed to have created as lo stato totalitario' i.e., the 'totalitarian state'.

The original sense in which 'totalitarian' was coined, least viable for its connotations today but pertinent to understanding the context of its earliest instances, was for representing the state through Giovanni Gentile's philosophy. For him, 'Totalitarian' was the condition of the state in which all activities of civil society, inadvertently or not, ultimately lead to, and therefore perpetually exist in, something resembling a state. With that consideration therefore is an express and underlying need for advancement to come through synthesis of every quality of society through recognition in policy and by official mandate of everything which can take part within the sphere of human living, by the state. Thus, this kind of Totalitarianism originated as a term for an idea meant to represent an opposition to both socialism and liberalism.

4.3 What is Totalitarianism?

Today, the word Totalitarianism is generally used to refer to systems of government which are not representative, characterized by the existence of a single political party organized on a dictatorial basis. The identity between the party and its policies and the governmental policies of the country in which it exists, are so close that the party and the government constitute virtually an indistinguishable unit.

The Cambridge International Dictionary of English identifies it along the following lines:

- A political system in which those in power have complete control and do not allow people freely to oppose them
- In totalitarian systems, everyone tends to suspect everyone else, even members of their own circle of family and friends.

It can also be identified in terms of -

- centralized control by an autocratic authority
- the political concept that the citizen should be totally subject to an absolute state authority

In a Totalitarianism system the state involves itself in all facets of society, including the daily lives of its citizens. A totalitarian government seeks to control not only all economic and political matters but the attitudes, values, and beliefs of its population, erasing the distinction between state and society. The citizen's duty to the state becomes the primary concern of the community, and the goal of the state is the replacement of existing society with a perfect society. Of course, the perception of the perfect society would vary depending on the nature of the governing ideology.

As pointed out by George H. Sabine in *A History of Political Theory,* in a totalitarian state the 'Government may, indeed must, control every act and every interest of every individual or group in order to use it for enhancing national strength.' According to the theory of totalitarianism, therefore, government is not only absolute in its exercise but unlimited in its application. Nothing lies outside its jurisdiction. Ever interest and value—economic, moral and cultural are to be controlled by the government. No organisation , whether they are political parties, trade unions or even cultural bodies, could exist without the permission of the government. Without the government's permission there could be no work, no industry, no manufacturing; nor could there be any publication or public meeting. Even leisure and recreation would be controlled so as to become agencies of propaganda and regimentation.

As a principle of political organisation, totalitarianism implies dictatorship. Federalism and local self government are negated. Liberal political institutions such as parliaments and independent judiciary are virtually destroyed and elections become stage-managed shows.

To quote Sabine, 'totalitarianism undertook to organise and direct every phase of economic and social life to the exclusion of any area of permitted privacy or voluntary choice.' In concrete terms it meant, first and foremost the destruction of the large number of organisations, such as labour unions, industrial associations, mutual aid bodies etc., which had long existed and which had provided agencies for economic and social activities. They were either wiped out or taken over and recast by the state.

In *The Great Issues of Politics,* Leslie Lipson points out that 'totalitarianism is indifferent to the size of the state .... It is the result of an alliance between privilege, monism, authoritarianism and unity of power. When these are added together, the sum represents the most complete (that is , total) domination of society by the state and of the state itself by a few.'

4.4 Causes of the Emergence of Totalitarian Regimes

There is no single cause for the growth of totalitarian tendencies. There may be theoretical roots in the collectivist political theories of Plato, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Karl Marx. But the emergence of totalitarian forms of government is probably more the result of specific historical forces. For example, the chaos that followed in the wake of World War I allowed or encouraged the establishment of totalitarian regimes in Italy and Germany, while the sophistication of modern weapons and communications enabled them to extend and consolidate their power.

Autocracies through the ages have attempted to exercise control over the lives of their subjects, by whatever means were available to them, including the use of secret police and military force. However, only with modern technology have governments acquired the means to control society; therefore, totalitarianism is, historically, a recent phenomenon.

4.5 Characteristics of Totalitarian States

A Totalitarian regime , thanks to technology and mass communications , takes over control of every facet of the individual's life. Everything is subject to control — the economy, politics, religion, culture, philosophy, science, history and sport. Thought itself becomes both a form of social control as well as a method of social control.

Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) popularized the use of the term *totalitarianism* (notably in her 1951 book *The Origins of Totalitarianism).* She was the first theorist to show the phenomenon of totalitarianism to be something quite new and peculiar to the twentieth century. She saw the essence of totalitarianism in the bureaucratization of terror in the enforcement of an ideology. She attempted to illustrate the commonalities between Nazism and Stalinism as theories of civics. Some people dub all fascist and communist regimes as *totalitarian,* while some others opine that some fascist regimes, such as Franco's Spain, and Mussolini's Italy before World War II, and some communist regimes, such as Yugoslavia under Tito, the People's Republic of China under Deng Xiaoping and Cuba under Fidel Castro, have authoritarian rather than totalitarian characteristics. Certain commentators consider the post-Stalin Soviet Union as a post-totalitarian society.

In Germany the use of the term by the Nazis was limited. It was apparently used first by Ernst Juenger in a military sense suggesting 'total mobilisation'. That was in 1930. In the next year Carl Schmitt, a lawyer who subsequently became one of the main ideologues of Nazism, discussed the National Socialist idea of the 'totalitarian state'. Hitler himself however seldom used the word and when he at all did he used the pre-fix 'so-called'.

Liberal opponents of Fascism were around that time also using the word; but that was in criticism of Fascism—indicating its dictatorial and dishonest practices.

In the Soviet Union, as noted in the Dictionary of the Soviet Academy, from the 1940s the term totalitarianism was widely used with reference to the 'Fascist Regimes'.

Western writers, critical of the Soviet Union , as also members of dissent movements , applied the term 'totalitarianism' to refer to the Soviet regime. Since the fall of the Nazi regime in Germany, in particular, many theorists in the United States and Western Europe have argued that similarities exist between the government of Nazi Germany and that of Stalin's Soviet Union. In most cases, this has not taken the form of emphasising the perceived 'socialism' of the National Socialists (Nazis) — mainly because this 'socialism' appeared chiefly in Nazi propaganda and did not make any significant appearance in mature Nazi theory or practice—but of arguing that both Nazism and Stalinism represent forms of totalitarianism. Needless to say, all this was strongly opposed by the Soviet Union and discarded as an aspect of Cold War propaganda.

As we can understand, the concept of totalitarianism remains highly controversial. Most historians who study Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union accept it only with reservations. But some (usually neo-conservative) scholars argue that Nazism resembled Stalinism not only in its methods of rule, as suggested by Arendt and other theorists of totalitarianism, but also in that both systems ran 'socialist' states. Those who hold this view point to the

occasional statements of Nazi leaders that they were 'socialists', as well as the more anti-capitalist planks of the Nazi party program. They tend to ignore the anti-communist planks of that same program. Furthermore, the background of Benito Mussolini, founder of the Italian fascist movement, as a socialist before the First World War, has served to further the claim that the roots of fascism (of which Nazism allegedly represents a special form) lie in socialist thought. The aforementioned neo-conservative scholars also note the collectivist, statist nature of some parts of the Nazi enterprise, which they see as essentially socialist. Others disagree with this view, pointing out that collectivist and statist practices have existed in a wide variety of governments throughout human history •— including some as old as Ancient Egypt — which have nothing to do with socialism. They further point to the fact that Nazi Germany allowed (and even encouraged) private enterprise.

Historians such as Ian Kershaw, Hans Mommsen, and Joachim Fest argue that the origins of the Nazi Party lie in the far-right nationalist and racist movements that existed in Germany in the post-World War I period as well as in older movements such as the Thule Society. Hitler, Goebbels and the Nazi ideologues consistently rejected any and all of the traditions of nineteenth and early twentieth century German socialism as articulated by Karl Marx, Ferdinand Lassalle, Karl Kautsky, August Bebel and others. Rather, such historians agree that the intellectuals to whom the Nazis looked from the beginning (whether Nietzsche or Houston Stewart Chamberlain) stood consistently to the right of centre, implying that the intellectual origins of Nazism lie in right-wing nationalist and racist thought, not in the socialist tradition.

Further, the cultural and political traditions the Nazis celebrated did not belong to the socialist tradition. Hitler and the Nazis revered the nationalist operas of Wagner, particularly The Ring Cycle, and found heroes in history such as Frederick the Great or the Teutonic Knights. Conversely, the Nazis rejected and even reviled socialist cultural and historical traditions such as the celebration of the French Revolution and the 1848 Revolutions or the lore of workers' struggles in momentous strikes and protests. The Nazis condemned and rejected the eighteenth and nineteenth century revolutionary movements and blamed these events for destroying traditional values and social relations. They also saw these revolutions as part of a Jewish conspiracy, since those revolutions resulted *(inter alia)* in the emancipation of the Jews.

The hierarchical nature of the anti-modern corporatism espoused by Nazism and other forms of fascism contrasts directly with the egalitarianism espoused by most forms of socialism. Kershaw argues that the Nazis opposed egalitarianism, had an elitist view of society and asserted that in competition amongst citizens the superior individual would emerge on top.

The relationship between totalitarianism and authoritarianism, too, has been controversial. Some analysts have seen totalitarianism as an extreme form of authoritarianism, while others have argued that they differ completely.

Some political analysts, notably neo-conservatives such as Jeane Kirkpatrick, have studied the various distinctions between totalitarianism and authoritarianism. They argue that while

both types of governments can behave extremely brutally to political opponents, in an authoritarian government the government's efforts focus mostly on those classified as political opponents, and the government has neither the will nor, often, the means to control every aspect of an individual's life. In a totalitarian system, the ruling ideology requires that every aspect of an individual's life become subordinated to the state, including occupation, income and religion.

Political theories such as libertarianism regard totalitarianism as the most extreme form of statism. However, other political philosophers disagree with this analysis as it implies that totalitarianism can develop through a slow and gradual increase from an operational government.

It has widely been noted that totalitarianism tends to revolve around a charismatic personality. As such, certain scholars have noted that totalitarianism requires a cult of personality around a charismatic 'great leader' glorified as the legitimator of the regime. In fact, totalitarian systems do seem to necessarily require the presence of a living human absolute leader at all times and do expect a certain type of guidance for nearly every aspect of life from that leader. Regardless of whether or not a newly installed leader of a totalitarian regime may happen to possess a certain natural charisma or not, the totalitarian system seems to tend to attempt to systematically impose this charisma onto the leader.

Critics of the concept of totalitarianism often argue that there is no clear distinction between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, and that such a distinction is only artificially created by those who wish to make certain dictatorships appear better than others, or those who wish to justify their alliance with (or support of) certain dictators rather than others.

Needless to say, totalitarianism is a complete negation of democratic principles. It undermines the dignity of the individual; tramples his rights and shows no concern for his liberties. Perpetual fear , suspicion and coercion form the bedrock of the system. The natural course of development and healthy growth of interpersonal relations in society are irreparably stunted.

4.6 Summary

Totalitarianism is seen by many as an extreme form of authoritarian rule, others contest this. In totalitarianism the state becomes all pervasive and controls not only the political arena, but the social sphere as well. In a word, nothing remains outside its control. Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy are typical examples of totalitarian systems. Certain historical conditions account for the rise of totalitarian regimes. The charismatic personality of the leader has been seen as important to the creation and sustenance of totalitarian systems.

4.7 Sample Questions

Broad questions

1. What do you understand by totalitarianism?
2. Examine the main causes of the emergence of totalitarian regimes.
3. Discuss the main features of totalitarian systems.

Short questions

1. In what respect is a totalitarian system different from a traditional dictatorship?
2. Can we distinguish between authoritarianism and totalitarianism?
3. What are the demerits of totalitarian systems?

Objective questions

1. Who was Giovanni Gentile?
2. When did totalitarianism emerge?
3. In which year had Mussolini first used the word 'totalitaria' in his speech?

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