

### **Socialism**

- The concept of equality was not a new phenomenon in history. The thinkers like Rousseau already declared that all are equal and all are descendants of nature. But in modern context, the concept of socialism is a product of industrial revolution. With the progress of industrial revolution the question of the exploitation of workers by capitalists emerged. Workers were compelled to live in very unhealthy and pitiable condition and to bear inhuman atrocities. The poor condition of workers drew the attention of some middle class thinkers first. They preferred to achieve their goal in a peaceful manner. They came to be known as early socialists.

#### ■ **Similarities between the liberal thinkers and the early socialists:-**

1. Both were middle class intellectuals i.e. they belonged to the same social background.
2. Both believed in peaceful transformation but not revolution.

#### ■ **Points of Dissimilarities :-**

1. While the liberal thinkers pleaded for a minimal state, the early socialists demanded the active role of the state and the direct government intervention in economy for uplifting the condition of workers i.e. maximal state.
2. While the liberals were inspired by the interest of the middle-class, but the early socialists by interest of the lower-class.

#### ■ **The Early Socialist Thinkers: -**

- **Saint Simon:-** Saint Simon was a leading thinker of his time. Saint Simon suggested that nature has abundant

resources so in place of competing with each other all should exploit the resources with combined efforts the requirement of all will be fulfilled. He gave the slogan that 'from each according to his capacity to each according his work'. His view got wider audience at the time of the revolutions of 1830s but after the relative failure of these revolutions his popularity declined, sharply.

- **Charles Fourier:-** Another French thinker, Charles Fourier, presented a solution which was a bit different from that of Simon. He believed people should live either in a village or in a Qasba in place of a town in order to avert the condition of economic exploitation. He recommended the formation of flanges, which was the cooperative organization of nearly 1600 farmers and which had to function on the principle of collective farming and distribution of benefits among all members. But the initiative for the formation of such organization was taken in USA not in Europe.

- **Robert Owen:-** Being a British Industrialist, he laid the foundation of industry in Scotland. In this industry he provided all facilities for the working class then he came to realize that through extending better facilities to workers even the profit of the industry increased. Thus, he came to the conclusion; a satisfied worker is a real worker.

- **Louis Blanc:-** Up to 1832 the failure of utopian socialism became almost clear. Thus, some socialist thinkers emerged and activists who were more pragmatic in their approach. Louis Blanc was one of them. He advocated political power as a prelude

to economic empowerment of workers. He believed if the government would fall under the control of the workers only then the government could do something substantial for the betterment in their condition. He advised the government to open social workshops which could provide essential technology and capital to workers so that the workers could have been economically enabled for self-reliant. He asserted that if we were to define our conception of the state our answer would be that the state is the banker of the poor. The government would finance and supervise the production and the formation of social workshops.

- His ideas influenced the policy of the government of Louis Philip which had been formed after the Revolution of 1830. Then after the Revolution of 1848 he was inducted in to ministry. In this status he carried a number of reforms in favour of working class including opening of social workshops. But progressive reforms created a sense of fear among middle class people which strengthened the hand of new president, Louis Napoleon III, who brought a coup against the republic and

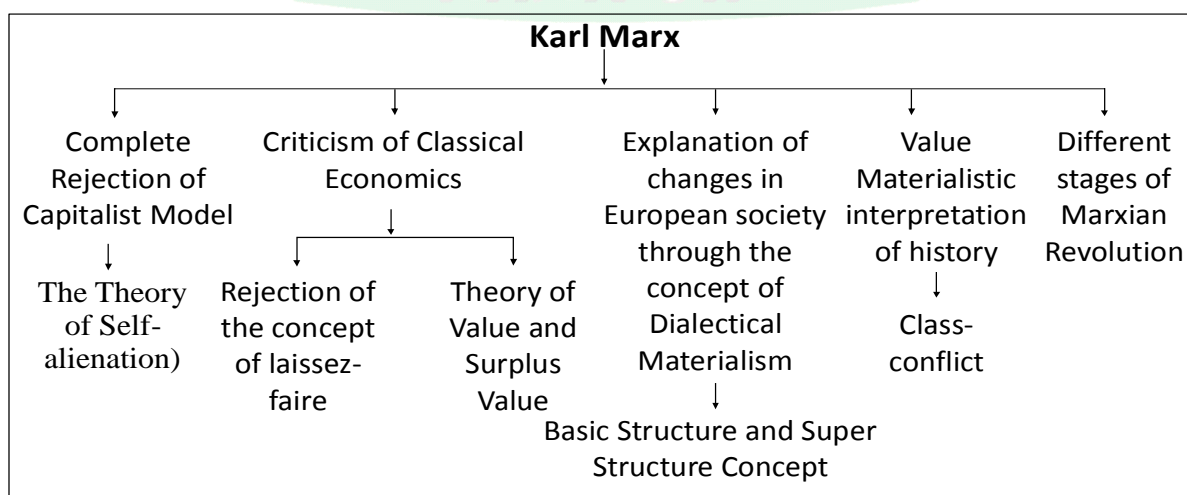
seized the power. So, progress of socialist ideas was checked in France very early.

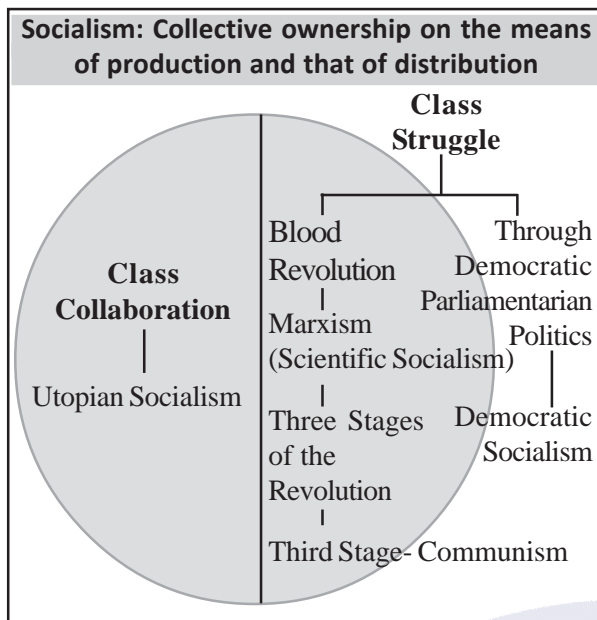
- **Positive Contributions of Early Socialist Thinkers:** - They were the earliest thinkers who raised the issue of the exploitation of labour by capital. So, they also worked as an ideological inspiration behind Marxism. Marx is supposed to be a member of the 'League of Just' which was inspired by the ideology of Saint Simon.

■ **Limitations:-**

- Very like the thinkers of the age of Enlightenment they believed in the basic goodness of man and perfectibility of the world. They believed in peaceful transformation but not in revolution. In fact, they were scared about the consequences of French Revolution as the revolution had started to devour its own children. They believed in the theory of class collaboration so it is through cooperation they tried to bring the change. Thus, on ground level hardly could they bring any substantial change in relation between capitalists and workers. That's why they were called Utopian socialist. Later Marx learnt a lesson from their failure and he went ahead of them.

### Scientific Socialism or Marxism





■ **The above diagram interprets the following facts:-**

1. Socialism is a broad concept and Marxism is a part of it. Therefore all Marxists belong to socialist, but all socialists do not belong to Marxist.
2. More or less, all the socialists were guided by the same objective, that was the establishment of an egalitarian society, but there was a profound difference on the issue of the means of achieving the goal. Some socialists wanted to achieve this goal through class-collaboration, but Karl Marx considered it impractical and he talked about adopting violent means by emphasizing class-struggle.
3. Marx determined three stages of proletarian revolution. He characterized the third stage as the stage of a classless and stateless society. Marx called this stage as 'Communism', but this stage remained synonymous with Marxism and proved to be Utopia for Marx himself.

■ **Marxism-**

- As an extreme form of socialism Marxism put a question mark to capitalist mode of production. Marx had earlier become a member of an organization, League of Just, along with his friend and colleague, Engels, then he changed its name as Communist League. In fact, he was largely

influenced by the famous text written by Engels on exploitative nature of industrialization, 'The condition of working class in Britain'. At the dawn of the year of revolutions in Europe in 1848, Marx in association with Engels presented his famous 'Communist Manifesto' in which he declared that 'workers of the world unite. You are nothings to lose but only chains.....'. This declaration proved a land mark in that after this incident lower class revolution was separated from that of middle class forever. Then in 1868, Karl Marx authored the first part of 'Das Kapital', while Engels completed its second and third parts.

**Specific Features of Marxism**

**1. Complete rejection of capitalist model:**

- **The theory of self-alienation:** - Marxian theory of self-alienation focuses over the exploitative nature of industrial society. According to this theory, it is said that what makes man different from animal is 'rationalism' but in actual sense it is man's capacity to work which makes man different and distinctive. Actually when man works and the fruit of the work goes to him, the man gets creative joy but if he works but its fruits are reaped by some other person in that situation he develops a sense of self-alienation. In the industrial society workers naturally develops a sense of self-alienation as the workers are deprived from fruits of their labour. Then Marx gives a solution too. The workers can come out from this situation provided they develop a sense of class-consciousness. In other words if he links his self to that of his class he will be come out from the situation of self-alienation.



## 2. Criticism of classical economics:

- **Rejection of the concept of laissez-faire (free market)** – Adam Smith propounded the theory of free market. It had the following aspects-

- i. The commodity market operates by its own internal laws, i.e. the laws of demand and supply.
- ii. There maintained a natural equilibrium in the interest among the producer, the consumer and the workers.

But Karl Marx challenged the above assumptions and emphasised on the following arguments -

- i. There is no equilibrium between the interests of the capitalists and the labours, because while the labour struggle for bread, the capitalists struggle for profit. So it is obvious that the bargaining power of the capitalists is much more than that of the labours and they force the labours to work for low wages.
  - ii. Furthermore, Karl Marx was aware of the negative impact of mechanization. According to him, machines easily replace human labour, so the bargaining power of the workers further decreases. Therefore, what Adam Smith calls free market is actually a monopoly-based economy of the capitalists.
- **Theory of Value and Surplus Value** – Karl Marx gave the theory of Surplus Value which was based on classical economics. In fact, according to the classical economists, capital and labor play a significant role in production. Labour increases the value of an object by giving shape to it. But according to Marx, in every production, as labour plays a very significant role but most of the profit is appropriated by the capitalists. So, the labour is deprived of its due share. Consequently, on the one hand, this

phenomena leads to the accumulation of capital while on the other it leads to the exploitation of labour. Moreover, when the capitalists invest this accumulated capital in other sectors, then the exploitation of other workers also started. Therefore, Marx believes that industrial society is inherently unjust.

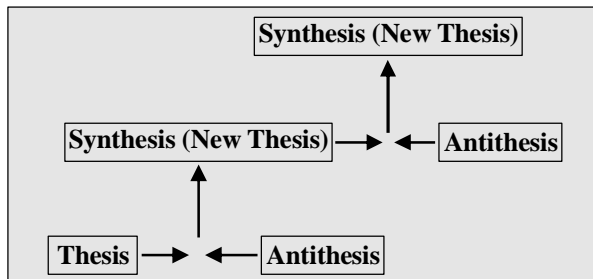
## 3. Explanation of changes in European society through the concept of Dialectical Materialism-

- **Different stages of development of European society** – Just as Charles Darwin argued about the gradual evolution of species in nature, Marx conceived the gradual evolution of European society. Marx divides European society into following stages-

***Primary Communism -> Slavery System -> Feudalism -> Capitalism -> Socialism.***

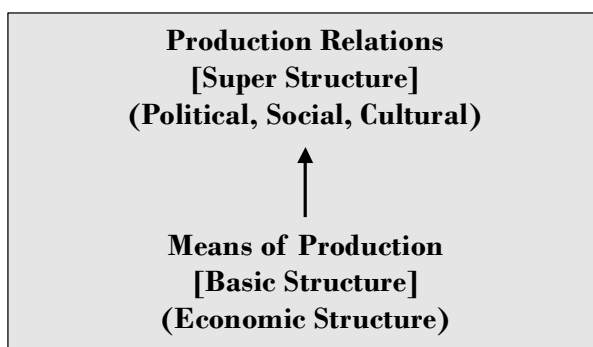
- According to Marx, society comes from one stage to another stage due to material change.
- **The Formula of Change– Dialecticism:** - In order to explain change he propounded the theory of dialectical materialism. In fact, Marx borrowed the concept of dialecticism from Hegel, a great German philosopher of 19th century. He was an Idealistic thinker. Hegel took dialecticism as a basic factor of change but, as he was an idealistic thinker so he conceived this dialecticism on an ideological basis. According to him, whenever there is a change in ideology it brings changes in society. But how the ideology changes, for this he gave the concept of dialectics. Hegel represented this dialecticism through the terms- 'Being', 'Not being' and 'Becoming'.
- Marx was greatly influenced by this concept. He was basically a materialistic scholar, so he applied it to the material base i.e. the means of production. So his dialecticism reflected itself through the

concept of class-conflict. He coined the term 'Thesis', 'Anti-thesis' and 'Synthesis'. On this basis he explained the changes in European society. According to him, if slavery was thesis and feudalism was anti-thesis, capitalism was synthesis. Similarly, if feudalism was thesis and capitalism was anti-thesis, socialism is synthesis.



#### 4. Materialistic interpretation of history and Class-conflict:-

- Marx explains the change through basic structure and super structure relations. He calls economic structure or the means of production as the basic structure. He emphasizes that struggle goes on between two classes in order to have the control over the means of production. Then the class which emerges to be victorious develops control over the means of production. But as class struggle is not still over that's why he conveniently brings certain changes in political, social and cultural structure which Marx calls super structure. It was characterized as production relation as well. So, Marx proved that super structure is not independent rather it is shaped by the basic structure. In other words, it is the economic or material factor which gives shape to political change, social change, ideological change etc.



#### 5. Different stages in Marxian Revolution:-

- First stage or Direct action:-** According to Marx, the proletariat class (industrial working class) could make an attack on the government through a bloody revolution and it will seize the power.
  - Second stage or the dictatorship of the proletariat:-** After seizing the power, the proletariat class could establish its dictatorship and while using the same state machinery through which bourgeoisie class had once exploited the proletariat, it would terminate the bourgeoisie class itself. Then it was during this stage the proletariat class should work for the spread of the revolution in other regions.
  - Third stage or Classless and stateless society:-** Naturally, a time will come when in every region there would be a dictatorship of the proletariat class. So, now there would be a single class that would be the proletariat class. After that, there would be no more any need for the state. Naturally, the state would wither away. This state was characterized as the stage of a classless and stateless society. Marx called this stage as 'Communism', but this stage proved to be Utopia for Marx himself.
- **Steps put forward by Karl Marx to organize workers in Europe:-**
    - Karl Marx not only gave a strong ideological challenge to the contemporary capitalist model, but also made active efforts to spread that ideology. He believed that, the proletarian revolution will take place in the most industrialised nation because there will be maximum conflict between the interest of capitalist class and working class. It will lead to the excessive exploitation of workers and a sense of class consciousness will develop among them. Therefore, in London, he tried to organize the workers of Britain by forming a Workingmen's Association. Then, in 1864, he formed the 'Socialist

International' and tried to propagate his ideas through it. It could not last long, very soon it was disintegrated.

■ **The Impact of Marxism on Europe:-**

- Marx remained active during the Revolutions of 1848 but after the failure of Revolutions the progressive elements in society were suppressed and the reactionary elements resurfaced. Thus for some time even Marx was relegated to the background. But Crimean war turned to be a watershed in European history. It gave a serious jolt to old order in Europe and prepared the way for further changes.
- Marx once again became active during 1860s, and he formed the socialist international in 1864. Marx's motive was to organize the workers of Britain and France and to prepare them for revolution. Socialist international included, apart from Marxists, moderate socialists, anarchists and other thinkers as well.
- Although very soon socialist international collapsed but it encouraged changes in Europe. Firstly, now the workers turned from economic demands towards political demands. Now their objective was to capture political power. Secondly, political movements intensified in central and eastern Europe.
- Labour movement became intense in Britain. A major strike was organised at London dockyard in 1889. After that the Labour party was formed in London and it carried out various welfare works for the laborers. Thus Marxism's influence was on wane in Britain.
- After the battle of Sedan and the fall of Louis Napoleon III, Marxists became active in France. They toppled the government of Paris in 1871 and maintained their control over the government for two months. But soon reactionary forces overpowered them and their government declined. This government was known as Paris Commune.
- Social Democratic Party was formed in Germany. This party was also influenced by Marxism. Its objective was to topple the government by means of Proletariat revolution and capture the power. So, German Chancellor, Bismarck gave emphasis over welfare works to check the influence of this party. Finally the German working class diverted from the objective of revolution. Then Socialist Democratic Party too changed its objective. It now concentrated on entering the government by democratic process and work for socialist transformation. Apart from these countries, Marxists were active in other countries as well like Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland etc. But nowhere they get success in carrying out Proletariat revolution. Marx died in 1883.
- According to the prophecy of Marx, the proletarian revolution would take place in those countries which were most industrialized. So such revolution had to take place in Britain or Western Europe or in Germany. It is said that Marx himself organised the first Socialist International in order to spread socialist ideas in Europe. But in spite of the best of the efforts by Marx the condition of revolution was averted in Western Europe and in Germany.
- **Why was revolution averted in Western Europe?**
- Actually Marx undermined the capacity of capitalism to adapt itself to new challenges. Due to following factors the condition of revolution was averted -
  - i. Bourgeoisie class and the aristocratic class formed a joint front against rising proletariat class.
  - ii. Growing benefit of imperialism was the second factor. In other words, capitalists of Europe moved to colonies for fresh exploitation and spared their workers for some time. Rather the capitalists of Europe gave some profit to their workers



from the wealth they had carried from the colonies.

iii. After a threat from Marxism, west European governments introduced welfare measures for their workers. So naturally their workers were diverted from the path of revolution.

- **Did Marxism turn to be complete failure?**
- We can't accept this view. Although throughout 19th century nowhere any revolution of Marxian type could occur and Marx died in 1883 with his unrealized dream. But it is equally true that the spectre of Marxist revolution changed the behaviour of capitalism. Then West European governments adopted welfare measures for workers and in most of the constitutions of Western Europe the term 'Socialist Republic' was consciously introduced.
- **Progress of individualism parallel to Marxism**
- Just after Communist Manifesto, Charles Darwin composed 'Origin of species' in 1859. In this book Darwin argued that there is gradual development of species in nature. The more powerful and capable species survived while the weaker ones get eliminated. Thus Darwinism laid stress on merit and competition.
- Then the theory of social Darwinism was developed by Herbert Spencer (British thinker). He propounded the theory of 'Survival of Fittest'. Social Darwinism criticized the welfare policies of the government and argued that it is against the law of nature. In a healthy competition the stronger should survive and progress and the weaker should get eliminated.
- In this way social Darwinism encouraged rightist ideology which led to militarism, racism and imperialism in Europe. Thus in 19th century and the first half of the 20th century there started a conflict between the middle class and the lower class. Along with this socialism-Marxism

confronted ultra-nationalism, imperialism and militarism (Fascism).

**Question: Marxian Communism is primarily the offspring of German Hegelianism and French Socialism. Comment.**

**Answer:** Marxism was an extreme form of socialism and factors like the ideas of the French socialists and that of the German philosopher, Hegel played an important role in motivating it.

**Role of French Socialists-**

- French socialists like Saint Simon, Charles Fourier and Louis Blanc inspired Marx in the following ways-
- 1. First of all, the French socialists exposed the exploitative nature of industrialization.
- 2. It was the French socialists, who, for the first time, demanded that the benefits of industrialization should go to the working class also.
- 3. They appealed to the government to take concrete steps to protect the interests of the workers. Louis Blanc motivated the workers to attain political power.

Yet Hegel's contribution to Marxism is far greater. The above mentioned socialist thinkers talked about class-collaboration, but Hegel's philosophy inspired Karl Marx for class-struggle. Marx borrowed the concept of dialecticism from Hegel and applied it to the material base, i.e. the means of production and he developed the concept of 'dialectical materialism'. So his dialecticism reflected itself through the concept of class-conflict.

Thus, Marxism is indebted to the ideologies of French socialism and that of Hegel.

**Question: Critically examine the impact of Marxism on 19th century Europe.**

**Answer:** In the 19th century, Karl Marx not only made a fierce ideological attack on capitalism, but also presented a complete framework for the working class movement. It is a matter of fact that he was partially successful in his objective.

### Steps put forward by Marx-

1. He presented the framework of proletarian revolution while attacking the capitalist mode of production.
2. He formed the Workingmen's Association to organize the workers of Britain.
3. He tried to bring the consciousness about revolution among the workers by forming the Socialist International in 1864.

### Impact-

Workers' activities increased in countries like Britain, France, Germany etc. For example, the Paris Commune in 1871, the progress of the Social Democratic Party in

Germany, and the formation of the Labor Party in Britain.

Although, it is true that nowhere this socialist revolution could take place or become successful but it is equally true that it was the fear of Marxism that changed the behaviour of the bourgeoisie government of western Europe. Now the capitalist governments took a welfare character and almost all the nations adopted universal suffrage.

Despite its partial success, Marxism remained the biggest threat to the capitalist world for nearly 150 years.

### Inter-Disciplinary Approach

#### *Important Thinkers of 19th century and their influence*

Karl Marx, Charles Darwin and Friedrich Nietzsche were prominent thinkers who left a deep impact in the history of 19th century. As we know that Marx tried to explain economic relations through scientific method. In the same way, Charles Darwin explained the origin of human and various species through scientific method. He wrote 'Origins of Species' in 1859. In this book, he showed that the evolution of man took place in a gradual manner. There was constant struggle among various species. Among them those who were weak were wiped out and those who were strong came forward. In this way, powerful species evolved gradually from weak species. On the basis of it, the concept of Survival of the Fittest came to light. Darwin's ideology produced the following effect.

First, the Christian concept regarding the origin of the world, under which the earth was believed to be only a few thousand years old, collapsed and a scientific ideology emerged in relation to the origin of earth.

Secondly, though Charles Darwin's theory was in the context of the origin of the earth and animals only, but some individualist thinkers tried to apply it in social relations as well. This came to be known as 'Social Darwinism'. Herbert Spencer was an important thinker in this context. Before Darwin, He had already propounded the theory of survival of the fittest in social context. After Darwin's theory of evolution, this idea got further impetus. Herbert Spencer was just opposite to Marx. If Marx was a radical socialist, Herbert Spencer was a radical individualist. Herbert Spencer believed that even in the society the talented person should get the opportunity to progress and the weak people should be wiped out. Under the influence of this idea, he opposed the welfare works being done by the government. In his view, this would lead to wastage of state resources and efforts would be futile to save the weak. On the basis of this idea, he justified war also



because through it, the weak are destroyed and the powerful get an opportunity to move forward. This idea of Spencer made a deep impact on American capitalists and they emphasized on open competition. Further, the influence of Social Darwinism was also visible on radical nationalists in Europe like Mussolini and Hitler.

Another thinker of the 19th century was Nietzsche. His thinking was also radical. He challenged all the ideas that had evolved since Plato. He declared that there is neither a single truth nor a single path leading to the truth. In a way, this ideology also became a precursor of post-modernism.

Just after these thinkers, another thinker emerged in the early decade of the 20th century. He was Sigmund Freud. If Marx applied the scientific method to the economic field and Darwin to the Earth and human evolution, Freud applied it to the study of human psychology and various approaches to life. The method he developed is called Psychoanalysis. He changed the basis of the analysis of human personality and tried to prove that human's work behaviour is more influenced by his subconscious mind than conscious one. As a result, it is now difficult to categorise a person between good and bad.

All the thinkers mentioned above gave a different direction to the history of the 19th century to the early 20th century and indirectly contributed to the First World War.

