Socio-Political Philosophy

COURSE CODE: M23PH08DC

Discipline Core Course

Postgraduate Programme in Philosophy

SELF LEARNING MATERIAL

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

Vision

To increase access of potential learners of all categories to higher education, research and training, and ensure equity through delivery of high quality processes and outcomes fostering inclusive educational empowerment for social advancement.

Mission

To be benchmarked as a model for conservation and dissemination of knowledge and skill on blended and virtual mode in education, training and research for normal, continuing, and adult learners.

Pathway

Access and Quality define Equity.

Socio-Political Philosophy

Course Code: M23PH08DC

Semester - II

Discipline Core Course
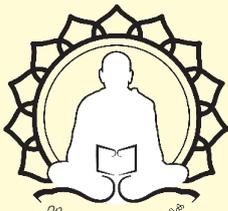## Postgraduate Programme in Philosophy
Self Learning Material

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The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

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MA Philosophy

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Dear learner,

I extend my heartfelt greetings and profound enthusiasm as I warmly welcome you to Sreenarayanaguru Open University. Established in September 2020 as a state-led endeavour to promote higher education through open and distance learning modes, our institution was shaped by the guiding principle that access and quality are the cornerstones of equity. We have firmly resolved to uphold the highest standards of education, setting the benchmark and charting the course.

The courses offered by the Sreenarayanaguru Open University aim to strike a quality balance, ensuring students are equipped for both personal growth and professional excellence. The University embraces the widely acclaimed "blended format," a practical framework that harmoniously integrates Self-Learning Materials, Classroom Counseling, and Virtual modes, fostering a dynamic and enriching experience for both learners and instructors.

The university aims to offer you an engaging and thought-provoking educational journey. The postgraduate programme in Philosophy is designed to be a continuation of the undergraduate programme in Philosophy. It maintains a close connection with the content and teaching methods of the undergraduate programme. It advances the more nuanced aspects of philosophical theories and practices. The university has recognised that empirical methods have limitations when explaining philosophical concepts. As a result, they have made a deliberate effort to use illustrative methods throughout their content delivery. The Self-Learning Material has been meticulously crafted, incorporating relevant examples to facilitate better comprehension.

Rest assured, the university's student support services will be at your disposal throughout your academic journey, readily available to address any concerns or grievances you may encounter. We encourage you to reach out to us freely regarding any matter about your academic programme. It is our sincere wish that you achieve the utmost success.
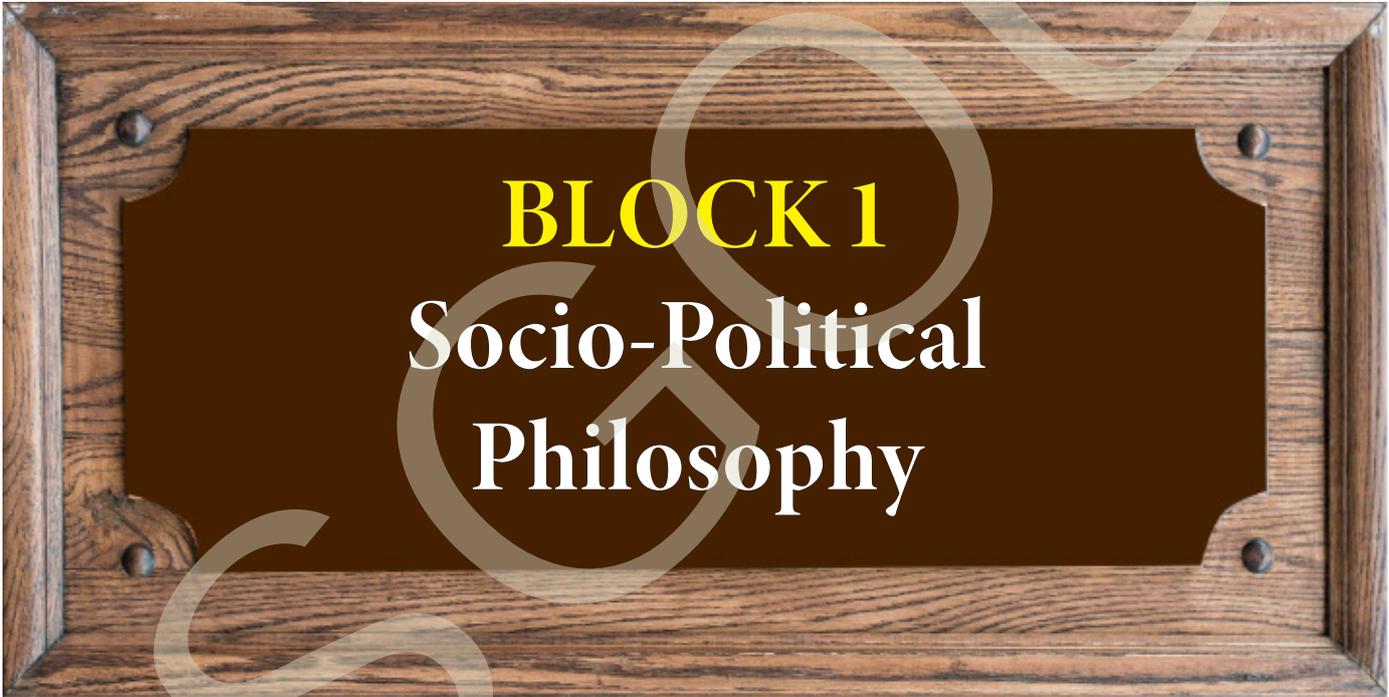
Warm regards.
Dr. Jagathy Raj V. P.   01-09-2024

Contents

BLOCK 1
Socio-Political Philosophy

UNIT 1
What is Political Philosophy?

Learning Outcomes

By the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the fundamental themes of political philosophy and its distinction from politics and political science

- recognise the ethical underpinnings of the political philosophy

- understand the major ideas and concepts used in political philosophy

- consider the importance of ideas and ideologies in daily life and critically approach political philosophies as ideologies with their own methods and goals.

Background

"No man is an Island". Human beings live only in mutual interactions, engagements, and give-and-takes. Whether they like it or not, they cannot escape from being affected by social and political issues. Political philosophy, as an academic field, discusses various questions pertaining to society and the state. They include the following questions: Are human beings individual by nature, or are they social by nature? What is the justification of the state and state power over individuals? How did the state evolve, and who gave the state consent to rule the people? What is the extent to which a state can exert its force, power and sovereignty over the people? Do ideas have any place and significance in politics and political life? Or, is politics a mere field of the interests and whims of the ruling elites? Do ideologies have any place in politics? What is the standard with which we can distinguish between ideologies? Questions such as this have been dominant since people happened to submit themselves to a sovereign authority such as the state. All the concerns, questions, discourses, beliefs and practices in any collective form of life are the issues of political philosophy. Philosophers have been discussing these issues in various ways, and such thoughts have social implications.

Discussion

1.1.1 Politics, Political Science and Political Philosophy

Politics is actually the relationship between the state and the people. Ever since the state came into existence, a peculiar form of relation between the state and the people also came into existence. What kind of relation should exist between them has been a topic of interest from ancient thinkers onwards. Colin Bird begins the Introduction of his book An *Introduction to Political Philosophy* by explaining the two faces of politics: good politics and bad politics. He compares politics with weather and observes that politics, much like the weather, exhibits dual facets, each marked by distinct characteristics. At times, politics manifests as a serene and seemingly untroubled landscape characterised by stability, predictability and consensus. This aspect is revealed to us through established beliefs, institutions and practices that haWve endured for generations, embodying widespread acceptance of particular political frameworks, methods and the values they uphold. From this point of view, entrenched rules and principles with in the community serve as legitimate standards for evaluating and critiquing members' behaviour and conduct. Administrative and bureaucratic procedures, such as the issuance of passports and the enforcement of contracts, operate smoothly, ensuring wrongdoers are brought to justice through accepted channels.

Conversely, the second facet of politics can engender conflict, chaos and coercion, bringing forth brutality, uncertainty, and disorder. This site is exemplified by instances of violence, destruction, and fear, ranging from missile attacks, bombing and terrorist attacks to genocides, ethnic cleansing and coups. The politics in this face encompasses upheavals like revolutions, legislative overhauls, and electoral reversals, alongside forcible measures like conscription and martial law. Ethical and religious rifts, international tensions, and ethnic hatred further contribute to this turbulent landscape. In addition, intrusive surveillance, violations of privacy, and instances of intolerance, arrest and torture, capturing of media, democratic institutions and judiciary underscore the oppressive dimensions of political power.

- Politics as a stable and serene landscape

- Politics as a chaotic, destructive and violent landscape

Having said this about politics, let us come to the political science. Political science, like most of the social sciences (or even natural sciences in a distant sense), significantly deals with the existing states of affairs. There is a distinction between political science and political philosophy even when an array of themes, problems, discussions and methods links both. Political science makes a positive analysis of social and governmental structures, political institutions, power and power dynamics, constitution, law, judiciary, voting behaviour, electoral dynamics, political parties, international relations, public policy and behaviour. It is a scientific study of politics and focuses on what a polity is, how governments are formed and how they function, how and on what basis policies are formulated and implemented, how societies or collectives organise themselves politically, etc.

- Political science is a scientific study of the existing state of social affairs.

Political philosophy, however, is the study of fundamental questions about governance, politics, and society. It is a philosophical analysis of the themes, concepts and problems in politics. It aims at certain political ideals and begins with the question, "What ought to be a person's relationship to society?" In response to this question, political philosophy seeks to apply ethical concepts to the social sphere. It investigates a wide variety of forms and structures of government, social existence, and social collectives in which people live. Political philosophy, while trying to apply ethical concepts to the collective forms of life, attempts to provide a standard to analyse, judge and evaluate the existing social institutions, practices and relationships.

- Political philosophy is a philosophical analysis of the fundamental questions in politics.

- 'What ought to be' is the concern of political philosophy.

Political philosophy investigates the fundamental questions about politics and society, including the nature of justice, rights, authority, and the role of the state. Political philosophy finds its interest in normative inquiry, examining the underlying principles and values that form and inform those political systems, practices and phenomena. To compare and contrast, political science tries to understand the mechanics and dynamics of politics. In contrast, political philosophy aims to critically evaluate and question the underlying principles and foundations of political systems on its way to generating visions of a good and just social life. The thrust of political philosophy is on what ought to be the ruling self of values and institutions.

- Political philosophy aims to investigate and generate visions of the good life

1.1.2 Ethical Underpinnings of The Political Philosophy

A.R. M. Murray states that what is usually meant by political philosophy is "a fundamental moral proposition or propo-

sitions providing a categorical justification for certain political ideals." That means, with its primary question as "What ought to be a person's relationship to society," political philosophy has its foundations and beginnings in ethics, which deals with questions such as "What is the right thing to do?" "What is the good life for human beings?" "How do we live happily?" "What kind of life is an ideal one?" etc. It deals with both onto-logical and ethical questions. The ontological questions pertain to the actual existing problems and ethics of what ought to be done to attain the desired goals. It has also become normal for political philosophy to be understood in association with moral philosophy, resulting in discourses like "Moral and Political Philosophy." In short, as political philosophy presumes that people are social beings at their core or are by nature sociable, it asks the question: "What kind of life is proper for a person who lives among people." It simultaneously examines the part and whole, the individual and society, the nation and the world, and the world and nature.

The links in the approaches in ethics and politics will show us how the beginnings of political philosophy lay in ethics. For example, according to the ethical utilitarianists, good and justice is when the greatest amount of happiness is delivered to the greatest number of people. By drawing practical applications from the above, the utilitarianists in the politics would promote those institutions or developments which secure the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. Similarly, ethical deontologists who uphold that the highest good is served by doing the duties would justify those institutions that best serve us by doing their duties.

Political philosophy is an attempt to justify certain assumptions and postulations about the methods, forms and aims of government. Murray states: "In most political philosophies, this justification has been a moral justification and has taken the form of an argument that certain forms of government, e.g. a democratic constitution, and they alone, are morally justifiable. This type of political philosophy is, therefore, essentially an application of moral philosophy to the political field." The ethical underpinnings of the political philosophy are also evident in the fact that the differences of a policy or rule or law can be traced, in the end, to different 'political philosophies', which are nothing but different assumptions about what is right or wrong to do in politics.

On the other hand, it is the naturalist conception of morality

that has been held in the case of certain political philosophies, most notably in the case of Machiavelli, Hobbes and Bentham. These philosophers have not attempted to justify the government on moral grounds, that is, on what form of social life is right or wrong or ideal. Murray observes: "The justification offered has been conditional on the truth of an empirical assumption about the object of government, which has usually been identified with the desire of the majority of people. Thus, Machiavelli believed that everyone desired a strong and efficient government; Hobbes believed that everyone desired peace and security; and Bentham believed that everyone desired happiness. None of these philosophers held that there is any objective sense in which people *ought* to desire these ends; it is, they held, simply a fact that the large majority of people or all people do desire them..."

In this sense, political philosophies can be classified into moral and naturalistic theories of the State. While the moral theories claim to justify government on ethical grounds, the naturalistic theories claim to explain it on empirical/scientific grounds. The moral theories argue that their justifications are categorical and unconditional. In contrast, the justification given by naturalistic theories is necessarily hypothetical as it is necessarily conditional upon the desire for a certain end. Also, in moral theories, the ends of government are defined in terms of 'ought', that is, as the ends which ought to be pursued, whereas in naturalistic theories, these ends are defined in terms of 'is', that is, as the ends which are desired.

Moral Theories, which function as the foundation of political theories or ideologies, can be categorised into two: theories, which primarily consider the good of the state as primary and theories, which consider the good of the individual as primary. The former theory is known as *Organic or Collectivist Theory*, which states that, for the good of the state, a standard is fixed to which the individual ought to conform and act. The latter theory is known as Individuality Theory, in which, for the good of the individual, a purpose is fixed that the state ought to serve. This division generally corresponds to the popular distinction between 'totalitarian' and 'democratic' theories of government.

The above point also expresses a methodological issue in political philosophy with regard to individualism and holism. In doing a philosophical examination of political activity, philosophers who seek to explain social behaviours and actions

in terms of individual actions are known as methodological individualists. In contrast, those who seek to explain social behaviours and patterns in terms of collective actions are known as methodological holists. The bifurcation results from a metaphysical division of what an appropriate unit of study is. While the political individualists claim that the whole (society, culture or nation) is nothing but the sum of its individual members, the political holists argue that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In the political realm, the argument of the holists is translated into the state being greater than the citizenry or the people. The holism is also known as 'collectivism' in general and all collectivist theories deny/ reduce the value and authority of the individuals in relation to a collective entity.

1.1.3 Ideas and Concepts in Political Life

Political life gains weight and strength based on the crucial concepts and ideas with which it is concerned. Some underlying concepts and ideas that reign over politics and political life are state, power, authority, sovereignty, coercion, people, representation, rights, rules, laws, duties, freedom, equality, justice, liberty, legitimacy, common good, etc. Most often, politics is synonymously used with power.

Stressing the significance of ideas and concepts in political life, in his *An Introduction to Political Philosophy,* Colin Bird discusses Aristotle's emphasis on why our political interaction is not like that of bees, ants and herds of wildebeest. He states: "Wildebeest do not talk, and they do not use concepts. They do not recognise 'authority,' they have no notion of what it is to be 'represented' by other wildebeest, and they do not fuss about 'Wildebeest rights.' Nor do they urge allegiance or resistance to various practices within their herds for the sake of 'freedom and equality,' or on the grounds that they are 'required' as a matter of 'justice,' that they possess or lack 'legitimacy,' that they are part of or inimical to the 'common good,' and so forth. However, such concepts seem central to human politics and to our efforts to justify our political arrangements to each other."

1.1.4 Political Ideologies or Political Schools of Thought

Political schools of thought exist based on their approaches and standpoints on the concepts, ideas, and problems in political life, as well as their ends, goals, or ideals. Their

difference is mainly based on their approaches to the following: people and state, government, power, political behaviour and institutions, redistribution of wealth, capital and resources, free market system, control and ownership of the production, human reason and freedom, tradition and reforms, hierarchical and authoritarian structures such as parental authority, money, legal institutions, rights of people or society versus rights of the whole planet and other species, etc.

Before discussing political ideologies, one needs to understand a little about political ideas. In philosophy today, ideas/thoughts and actions are not viewed as entities existing separately or in a detached sense. Rather, it is believed that both ideas and actions constitute and influence each other. This is the case in political philosophy as well. That is, political ideas are not merely a passive result of some vested interests or personal ambitions of the politicians. Rather, political ideas can trigger and guide action itself so they can shape or reshape material life. At the same time, it is also well-accepted that every thought is a product of its own time. That means political ideas do not emerge/exist in a vacuum. Rather, they are shaped by the social and historical situations and circumstances in which they develop and by the political motivations they serve. In short, political theory and political practice are inseparably linked, and any balanced account of political life must acknowledge this constant interplay between theory and practice.

Coming to political ideology, Martin Seliger (1976) defines it as "a set of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify the ends and means of organised social action irrespective of whether such action aims to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuild a given social order". His point is to affirm that an ideology is not a collective of dead, rotten ideas but an action-orientated system of thought. Andrew Heywood asserts that as per this definition, the ideologies cannot be seen as good or bad, true or false, open or closed, emancipating or oppressive, as they can be all these things. Many scholars view the phrase 'ideology' as a social-scientific concept that is inclusive in the sense that it can be applied to indicate all 'isms' such as conservativism, fascism, liberalism, and Marxism.

The above conception of ideology would clearly reject Marx's negative concept of ideology, which is that ideology is a ruthless enemy of truth and that falsehood is always implicit in ideology. Heywood also affirms that as 'ideology' can be interchangeably used with terms such as 'belief system', 'world-

view', 'doctrine' or 'political philosophy', there is no point in attributing a separate or distinctive or restricted meaning to the same. He observes that various meanings have been attached to ideology. Some of them are following; political belief system, an action-orientated set of political ideas, ideas of the ruling class, world-view of a particular social class, political ideas that embody or articulate class interests, ideas that propagate false consciousness among the oppressed sections, ideas that situate the individual within a social context and generate a sense of collective belonging, and an officially sanctioned set of ideas used to legitimise a political system or regime. The all-embracing political 'ideology' claims a monopoly of truth, an abstract and highly systematic set of political ideas.

a. Liberalism

Liberalism is derived from the word 'liberty', which refers to freedom and toleration rather than notions of justice, interventions, and actions. The Latin 'liber' referred to a class of free men, who were neither serfs nor enslaved people. The 'liberal' in general discourse means 'generous' as in the case of helping with food and drink. And, when it is used with reference to social attitudes, it implies openness or open-mindedness. Individualism, liberty, and human rationality could be identified as the nexus of the core concepts of liberalism, and they are increasingly associated with ideas of freedom and choice. Liberalism conveys two distinct positions in political philosophy: first, a pro-individualist theory of people and government, and second, a pro-statist or a 'social democratic' connotation that pervades modern thinking. The former is often known as 'classical liberalism' while the latter is 'social democratic liberalism.'

Liberal ideas emerged from the breakdown of Feudalism in Europe and from the growth of a market or capitalist society instead of Feudalism. Liberalism, in many ways, reflected the aspirations of the rising middle classes whose interests came in conflict with the established power and authority of absolute monarchs and aristocratic landlords. Liberal ideas and ideals were radical in the sense that they sought complete reforms or even massive revolutions. The English Revolution of the seventeenth century and the American and French Revolutions of the late eighteenth century embodied elements that were distinctively liberal even though the phrase 'liberal' was not used in a political sense at that time. Liberals challenged and rejected the absolute power of the monarchy, which was

founded upon the 'divine right of kings.' They advocated constitutional and representative governments in the place of monarchies. They severely criticised the political and economic privileges of the kings, the landed aristocracy and the profound unfairness of a feudal system in which social position was determined by the 'accident of birth'.

Liberalism fought against the feudal period/mindset, which was characterised by the idea of individuals who do not possess their own personal and unique properties and interests. In the feudal period, the people were seen primarily as members of the social groups or collectives to which they belonged, such as family, village, local community or social class and, their lives and identities were fundamentally determined by the character of these groups which did not change from one generation to the next. Against this, liberalism promoted individuals who have personal and distinctive qualities or values, as was evident in the growth of natural rights theories in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The natural rights theories suggested that individuals were invested in a set of God-given natural rights, which John Locke defined as 'life, liberty and property'. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) expressed a similar belief in the dignity and equal worth of human beings in his conception of individuals as 'ends in themselves' and not merely as means for the achievement of the ends of others.

> • Life, liberty and property of each individual are the most important aspects of liberalism.

In the case of freedom, liberalism gave individuals the opportunity to pursue their interests by exercising the choice of where to live, who to work for, what to buy, and so forth. In the case of reason and freedom, liberalism linked both of them. It promoted a 'faith' in reason and freedom through applying one's reason as it was the central theme of key Enlightened thinkers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, Adam Smith, and Jeremy Bentham. In terms of justice, it denoted a particular kind of moral judgement, especially with regard to the distribution of rewards and punishment. In short, liberalism, as a political philosophy or ideology, insists that justice is about giving each person what they are 'due'. And, in a moral and ideological sense, liberalism is embodied in a commitment to and insistence on a distinctive set of values and beliefs. The most important of these are individual freedom, reason, justice, tolerance, and diversity.

> • Liberalism's faith in reason and giving each one what is due

b. Conservatism

The term 'conservative' refers to a variety of meanings: cautious behaviour, a conventional lifestyle, even conformist, or a fear of or refusal to change. By the 1800s, the term was used to denote opposition to the principles, spirit and ideals of the French Revolution in 1789. The conservative ideas arose in reaction to the fast pace of political, social and economic changes in the world, which the French Revolution primarily symbolised. During the nineteenth century, Western states were undergoing radical transformations unleashed by industrialisation and mirrored in the growth of liberalism, and when socialism and nationalism were preaching reforms and revolutions. In this time, conservatism stood in opposition to them, in defence of the traditional social order, which was significantly embattled.

- Resistance against the ideals and reforms

Conservatism, most of the time, found its big enemy in liberalism and liberal values and engaged in war with them. Some of the most significant central beliefs of conservatism are the following: Tradition, Human imperfection, Organic society, Hierarchy and authority, and Property. Conservatism argued and fought against change on various grounds, keeping its central task as the defence of tradition – values, patterns, practices, and institutions that have existed and endured throughout history and have been handed down from one generation to the next. Liberals, in contrast, strictly uphold that social values and institutions should not be evaluated according to how much and how long they have endured or survived. But, based on how far and to what extent they have fulfilled the needs and interests of individuals at each point in time. Once social institutions fail this test, according to liberals, they should be reformed or even removed or abolished, as in the case of monarchy, which is a redundant institution/system in the modern world.

- Defence of tradition, its values, practices and institutions

Conservatives resisted the changes and reforms for many reasons. They firmly believed that traditions, customs and institutions should be preserved precisely because they have survived the test of history. Along with this, one of the foundational ideas that charged conservatism as an ideology is their 'philosophy of human imperfection.' The liberal assumption was that human beings and human reason have capacities to bring about crucial things such as freedom and justice and that human beings are 'naturally good' or that they can be 'made good' upon the improvement of their social circumstances. This assumption, in its most extreme form,

even paved the way for utopian beliefs and envisioned the most perfectibility of humankind in an ideal society. However, conservatives dismiss all these ideas and reject them as idealistic dreams, at best, and base their theories instead on the belief that human beings are both imperfect and unperfectible.

c. Socialism

The term 'socialist' derives from the Latin 'sociare' meaning to 'combine' or to 'share.' Socialism arose as a reaction against the social and economic conditions generated in Europe by the growth of industrial capitalism. Socialist ideas were linked to the emergence of a new class of industrial workers who suffered poverty, degradation and inhuman working conditions, which were often a feature of early industrialisation. By the 1840s, the term was familiar in a range of industrialised countries, notably France, Belgium and the German states.

While socialism and liberalism are twin theories of the Enlightenment, having common roots and putting faith in principles such as reason and progress, socialism emerged as a critique of liberal market society. It attempted to offer a radical and revolutionary alternative to industrial capitalism. In the history of Political thought, two types of socialism have been discussed: utopian socialism and Marxian socialism. Utopian socialism was formulated by Thomas More and later by Robert Owen and Fourier. Both kinds of socialism envisage equality. Unlike utopian socialism, Marx and Engels suggested ways to actualise socialism. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels developed a complex and systematic theory of socialism that was determined to uncover the dialectics and 'laws of history'. They proclaimed that the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism was inevitable. In African, Asian and Latin American countries in the twentieth century, socialist ideas spread and developed as part of the anti-colonial struggle rather than a class struggle. The concept of the exploitation of the working class (proletariat) was replaced by that of colonial oppression, resulting in a powerful fusion of socialism and nationalism in such countries.

"No man is an island" is the central theme that socialism upholds. First and foremost, socialism is seen as an economic model, usually linked to some form of collectivisation and planning. In this sense, it stands in opposition to and as an alternative to capitalism. Socialism and capitalism are two qualitatively different productive systems. Socialism, understood in a broader sense, is a political ideology characterised by a

nexus of some particular ideas, values and theories such as Community, Cooperation, Equality, Social class and Common ownership. Socialism has a unifying vision of human beings, that is, social creatures who are capable of tackling and overcoming social and economic problems by anchoring themselves on the power of community rather than simply individual efforts. This collectivist vision of humankind criticises individualism and its striving for personal self-interest. It emphasises the capacity of human beings for collective action and working together to pursue certain goals.

The concept of human nature is important to understand socialism vis-à-vis liberalism or conservatism. Socialists, when compared to liberals or conservatives, believe that human nature has a social core and is 'plastic' shaped by the circumstances and experiences of social life. They will be far less willing than either liberals or conservatives to believe that human nature is unchanging and fixed at birth. In the philosophical debate on whether 'nature' or 'nurture' determines human behaviour, socialists would choose to side with nurture; that is to say, all human skills and attributes are learned and earned from society. All of us are subjected to experiences and practices in society that condition or shape our personality. One of the radical edges and the blind ideas of socialism is not its concern with what people are like but with what they can become ideally. This has led socialists to develop impractical and utopian visions of an ideal society in which human beings can achieve genuine emancipation and fulfilment as members of a community. Such a perfect community of socialism has only ended up in totalitarianism.

If liberals uphold a clear distinction between the 'individual' and 'society', socialists affirm that the individual is inseparable from society. While liberalism puts forth a concept of 'atomised' individuals, socialism would assert that human beings are neither self-sufficient nor self-contained. Socialism affirms that individuals can only be understood through social groups or collectives to which they belong. Socialism strongly propagates collectivism and central ownership of properties as a moral critique of capitalism. Liberalism and conservatism argue that, at the core, human beings are essentially self-seeking and egoistic. At the Same time, socialism considers human beings as selfish, materialistic and aggressive and argue that they are socially conditioned rather than natural. The dominant critique of socialism against industrialist capitalism

- No man is an island – but lives in collectives in give and take

- Thrust on 'nurture' in socialism
- Socialism and its utopian visions of an ideal society most often resulted in totalitarianism

- Central ownership of properties by the stated. Fascism

is that the latter encourages selfish and accumulative character in individuals, disregarding the collectivist or socialist nature of humans. Human beings are not utility maximisers; rather, they are made to act like that by the mechanism of the capitalist markets or capitalist economies charging them to do anything in the pursuit of profits.

d. Fascism

The term 'fascism' derives from the Italian word fasces, which means a bundle of rods with an axeblade bulging, which signified the authority of magistrates in Imperial Rome. In the 1890s, the word fascia was used in Italy to refer to a political group or band, usually of the revolutionary socialists. However it was only when Mussolini employed the term to describe the paramilitary armed squads which he formed during and after the First World War that fascism acquired a clear ideological meaning. 'Fascist' and 'dictator' are today commonly and interchangeably used to refer to those who express intolerant or illiberal views. However, identifying fascism with mere repression or violence will lose its political meaning, as a range of theories and values inspires fascist thinkers to achieve their goals. Perhaps no political terms are used so randomly and with such little precision as 'fascist' and 'fascism'.

Whereas liberalism, conservatism and socialism are nineteenth-century ideologies, fascism is a child of the twentieth century, specifically that of the period between the two world wars. History has witnessed ideologies emerging as revolts against the previous ideologies. If the Enlightenment was a revolt against the values, beliefs and practices of the medieval times of faith in God, fascism was a revolt against the ideas and values of the Enlightenment and modernity and the political principles that they laid. The Nazis in Germany, for instance, proclaimed that '1789 is Abolished', rejecting the ideals of the French Revolution. In Fascist Italy, slogans such as 'Believe, Obey, Fight' and 'Order, Authority, Justice' replaced the much familiar principles of the Enlightenment, 'Think, Use your Reason,' and that of the French Revolution, 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity'. Italy witnessed the formation of a fascist party in 1919, with its leader Benito Mussolini appointed as prime minister in 1922 and a one-party Fascist state established by 1926. At a similar time, German witnessed the formation of The National Socialist German Workers' Party, known as the Nazis, in 1919, which under the leadership of Adolf Hitler effortfully

- Accumulation of power in one

- Believe, obey and fight.

adopted the style of Mussolini's Fascists. Hitler was appointed German chancellor in 1933, and he turned Germany into a Nazi dictatorship in less than a year.

Fascism emphasises much on actions, not on ideas and targets the souls, not on the intellect. It has been viewed by scholars as a product of the nexus of various intellectual themes. The themes such as anti- rationalism, counter enlightenment, ultra nationalism, strong leadership, elitism, urge for uniformity and blind obedience to authority and power constitute the structural core of fascism.

> • Thrust on ultra and narrow nationalism

The anti-rationalism works out in the fascist philosophy of the limits of human reason by drawing attention to human's powerful drives, impulses and emotions. In abandoning the standard of universal reason in any sense, fascism placed its faith almost entirely in the extreme celebration of history, culture and community. This propagates the idea that a nation is animated by its collective and extreme spirit, which is a product of its unique and glorious history, culture and language and that communities are, therefore, organic or natural entities shaped not by the calculations and interests of universal rational individuals but by innate loyalties and emotional bonds forged by a common past. This concept of a strong nation or 'master race', which deserves to be presumably protected by a strong and self-sacrificing leader, is a reflection of the moral and cultural unity of the fascist regimes and was expressed in the Nazi slogan, 'Strength through Unity.' Collectively, with these ideas embedded in it, fascism becomes a unique political ideology which views war as good in itself, as reflected in Mussolini's words 'War is to men what maternity is to women.' The same approach is clear in Hitler's words: 'Victory is to the strong, and the weak must go to the wall.' Fascism as an ideology tests the ground of human existence in competition and struggle, leading to the ultimate test in war, which Hitler described as 'an unalterable law of the whole of life'. The fascists, in short, view the state as a supreme ethical goal or ideal reflecting the homogenous interests and fascinations of the national community and believing in totalitarianism.

> • Strength through unity and thirst for war

e. Anarchism

The word 'anarchy' is derived from Greek, which literally means 'without rule', and in everyday language, it is usually identified with disorder and chaos. Initially, the word 'anarchism' was employed in a critical/negative sense in order

to imply a breakdown or rupture of civilised or predictable order, which was the aim of the French Revolution. Anarchism prima facie challenges the fundamental idea and logic of the social contract theory, i.e., the general will and government is the solution to the problem of social disorder. Anarchists reject the state equivocally and condemn it as an unnecessary evil. The enforced and coercive authority of a sovereign state is nothing but a legalised oppressive mechanism operating upon the interests of the powerful and the privileged.

Anarchists advocate the abolition of rule, law and government, believing that a more natural and spontaneous social order will develop. If the social contract theory is a justificatory theory of the state and its accompanying institutions of government and the rule of law, anarchism goes in opposition to all these concepts. Along with anti-statism, natural order, anticlericalism, and economic freedom are some of the binding themes of anarchism. Proudhon suggests that 'society seeks order in anarchy'.

An important point about anarchism, when compared to other political ideologies like liberalism, socialism, conservatism or fascism is that it is one of the political ideologies which has never succeeded in winning power at the national level as far as the modern politics is concerned. No society or nation has been modelled or governed according to the anarchist principles, and hence, it is an ideology of less significance. As we know, liberalism, socialism, conservatism or facism as captured power and reshaped societies in the history.

f. Ecologism /Environmentalism

The term 'ecology' is derived from the Greek oikos, which means household or habitat. The German zoologist Ernst Haeckel coined the word in 1866 to refer to 'the investigations of the total relations of the animal both to its organic and its inorganic environment'. Ecologists criticise the most fundamental assumption upon which conventional political philosophies like liberalism, socialism, conservativism and anarchism and their variants are based. All the traditional doctrines or ideologies seek a good life for human beings and their groups - for instance, the individual, social class, gender, nation and humanity, which ecologism labels as 'anthropocentric' or human-centred. David Ehrenfeld (1978) calls this notion, which finds human beings as the centrepiece of existence, as the 'arrogance of humanism'.

- Without rule or order
- State as an unnecessary evil

- Against the state, order, and clerics and for individual economic freedom

- Anarchism as a political ideology has not yet captured the power in any nation

- Rejection of all conventional political philosophies for their human centrism
- 'Arrogance of humanism'

The central themes of ecologism include ecology, holism, sustainability, environmental ethics and self-actualisation. Instead of taking the conception of 'humanity' or human needs as its starting point, ecologism starts from a vision of nature as a network of precious but fragile relationships between various living species, including the human species and the natural environment. Humankind no longer occupies centre stage but is regarded as one among the multiple species and as an inseparable part of nature. Gandhi, for example, considers human beings both as a part of nature and as embedded within nature. Ecologism insists us on practising humility, moderation, and gentleness.

Summarized Overview

Socio-political philosophy encompasses a diverse array of topics and perspectives crucial for understanding polity, governance and societal organisation. Politics, political science, and political philosophy distinguish themselves through the study of power dynamics, empirical analysis of political systems, and the exploration of fundamental ethical questions surrounding justice and governance. Concepts such as authority, legitimacy, sovereignty, and democracy further elucidate the complexities of political life and its theoretical underpinnings. The examination of the core of various political ideologies, such as the emphasis of liberalism on individual rights, fascism on authoritarianism and centralisation of power, conservatism on reverence and submission for tradition, and environmentalism on advocacy for ecological stewardship takes us to the varied philosophical approaches to addressing societal and political concerns and challenges.

Self-Assessment

1. How do you differentiate politics, political science and political philosophy?

2. List out and elaborate on the main ideas used in political philosophy

3. Every political philosophy is a political ideology. Elucidate

Assignments

1. Explain the differential views of various political ideologies about the state.

2. Explain the justification of the government on moral grounds and natural grounds.

3. Critically examine, compare and contrast the following political ideologies: liberalism, socialism, conservatism and fascism.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

UNIT 2
Greek Beginning: Plato

Learning Outcomes

By studying this unit, the learner will be able to:

- get a general overview of Plato's philosophy, especially the interlinkage of various branches and concepts
- understand the nuances in the idea of justice in his political philosophy
- recognise the various elements which compose the just society and state
- appreciate the rich discussions in the initial ideas about social and political organisation in Plato's philosophy

Background

Republic is one of the most important dialogues by Plato wherein he engages in discussions on various things such as principles of definition, law of contradiction, fallacy of arguing or reasoning in a circle, distinction between the essence and accidents of a thing, distiction between means and ends, between causes and conditions, division of the mind into the rational, the appetited and the spirited, etc. Among all these, *Republic* is known for its engagement with socio-political issues such as individual, society, state, justice, education, government/rule. Plato started from scratch to develop a concept of a just society or state. Society, he believed, is truly just only when its structural and political arrangements work impartially to the demands and advantages of all. As Plato himself puts it, the project in the Republic is to "determine which whole way of life would make living most worthwhile for each of us". Plato's attempt to answer this question in the Republic became the prototype or model for a whole tradition of inquiry into the proper requirements and theories of the "common good."

Plato formed an analogy between just societies and just selves. He claimed that as a society is composed of potentially and actually conflicting individuals, groups, and collectives that can get in each other's way, an individual self is made up of different and

possibly contradictory psychological faculties. Each faculty has distinctive functions and generates distinctive desires. Plato distinguished three such elements: appetitive, spirited and reasoned. As partly appetitive beings, we naturally seek food, drink, shelter, sexual gratification, physical pleasure, and relief from pain. As partly ''spirited'' or emotional beings, we rejoice in activity and self-expression and find ourselves inspired to act from such motives as pride, anger, resentment, and love. And as partly rational beings, we seek and can achieve knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. According to Plato, our familiar struggles to suppress physical temptations, to swallow our pride, to remain firmly committed to some plan of action, and similar phenomena, all exemplify conflicts that often arise between these faculties of reason, spirit, and appetite.

Keywords

Republic, Dialectic, Justice, Society, Polity, Dialogue

Discussion

1.2.1 Introduction

The Socratic method used throughout the Platonic dialogues has an underlying strategy of educating and enlightening minds. The Socratic dialogue is called 'midwifery' as it is similar to the profession of assisting women in childbirth. In the intellectual 'midwifery,' Socrates helps one give birth to his ideas/views, think through them, and decide if they are alive or not. That is, if the ideas can stand up to the time or not. In the dialogues, rather than telling the interlocutors what they should think, Socrates is often wisely pushing his interlocutors to tell what do they think so that he can expose the flaws and inconsistencies in their thoughts and views. This philosophical mission of education is evident in all Socratic dialogues, especially the *Republic*. The ideal of the Republic, as one of the greatest works in the history of the politics and state, is a very careful and systematic moral education of the society.

- Midwifery helps one give birth to ideas.

- Socratic method aimed at critical thinking and self-reflection

Plato's theory of education is founded on the concept of recollection, which posits that all knowledge is innate in the mind and that learning is essentially the process of recollecting what the mind/soul already knows. Thus, Plato insisted that he knows nothing and teaches nothing. Rather, he only helps his fellow beings recollect what has already been imprinted in their minds. He affirms that knowledge is just a recollection of what

is pre-existing in the mind. To educate the people, he uses the Socratic method, which is a process of questioning and dialogue that helps fellow beings recall what their soul already knows, the ideas that are real in Plato. It is a process akin to awakening dormant knowledge. The Socratic method encourages critical thinking and self-reflection, aiding the recollection process. Also, the role of education, for Plato, is not about imparting new information but about guiding individuals to remember what their souls already know. Plato's emphasis on the education of guardians highlights the role of knowledge and wisdom in shaping virtuous individuals capable of governing justly.

* Plato's philosophy of humans

Plato's philosophy of human beings is important here. While Plato is the philosophical master of ideas and idealism, he is not socially and politically naïve. Despite his theory of ideas, he does not idealise human beings; rather, he is pessimistic about them. He believes that most people are stained and corrupted because they are irrational, driven by their appetites, egoistic passions and feelings and are led by beliefs and opinions. Human beings are not vicious by nature as some of the social contract theorists like Hobbes upheld. Plato affirms that human beings are social animals incapable of living alone. Living in communities and collectives is natural for them and they have capacities for rationality and goodness. Plato believes that if the political society is properly ordered and structured, it can contribute to the restoration of morals. He believes that good political order, good education and upbringing can produce "good natures; and [these] useful natures, who are in turn well educated, grow up even better than their predecessors."

* Philosophical examination of social and political issues since Socrates

In Cicero's words, it is Socrates who 'called down philosophy from the skies.' The pre-Socratic philosophers were mostly interested in cosmology and ontology; the prime question was about the fundamental stuff of the universe. However, Socrates' concerns, in contrast, were almost exclusively moral and political issues. Socrate's great student, Plato, followed this mission of philosophical examination of ethical and political issues. When a 'democratic' court voted by a large majority of its jurors for Socrates' execution on an unjust charge of impiety in 399 BC, Plato concluded that all existing governments were bad and almost beyond redemption. "The human race will have no respite from evils until those who are really philosophers acquire political power or until, through some divine dispensation, those who rule and have political authority in the cities become real philosophers."

Plato also founded an Academy in 385 BC, which then became a model for other schools of higher learning and later for European universities. The Academy provided a base for succeeding generations of Platonic philosophers until its final closure in A.D 529. It became one of the most famous teaching institutions of the Hellenistic world. Subjects such as mathematics, rhetoric, astronomy, dialectics, and others, all of which were seen as necessary for the education of philosophers and politicians, were taught there. The Academy also gave birth to many leaders, mentors, and constitutional advisers in Greek city-states.

1.2.2 Republic and Justice

In Plato's philosophy, epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and politics are closely connected and structured, providing his philosophy with an architectonic nature. Plato is known as the system builder in the history of Western philosophy, and this system building and the architectonic nature of his philosophy become most evident in his *Republic*. Murray observes the philosophical richness of the *Republic* specifically: "It (*Republic*) examines problems of ethics and political philosophy as well as those of logic, metaphysics and psychology. This is indeed one of the great merits of the work, for it draws attention to the important fact that the different branches of philosophy are intimately connected and that ethical and political doctrines cannot be finally assessed without consideration of their logical and metaphysical assumptions." In the following pages, we will see how some of the underlying ideas in Plato's metaphysics, ethics, and politics, such as goodness, justice, soul, and society, are also intertwined and thus need to be understood in relation to each other.

Murray's statement makes various strong assertions. One, the problems of ethics and politics are intimately connected in Plato, making us realise that the political realm cannot work without moral foundations and vice versa. Two, the problems of ethics and political philosophy cannot be examined as standalone problems. Rather, they can only be examined and understood in their intimate relation to the areas of logic, such as reasoning, clarity and analyticity, to the areas of metaphysics, such as the Platonic ideas; and to the areas of psychology, such as beliefs, behaviours and assumptions. This strong linkage and mutually constitutive nature of the realms of the moral and the political, both in theory and practice, is a quintessential Platonic idea.

- Plato's Academy as an inspiration for higher learning and critical thinking

- *Republic* and its various philosophical examinations

- Intertwined nature of politics, ethics, epistemology and metaphysics in Plato

The main project of the dialogue is to show that moral principles have a rational and objective basis or foundation and thus to refute the Sophists' contrary view that moral principles have a subjective and relative foundation. According to Plato, the core of morality lies in justice in its wider sense. The word 'justice' is derived from the Latin word "jungere" which means to bind or tie together. To put it in the context of polity, justice means tying individuals in a society or group together and harmonising a balance between them, resulting in an enhancement of human relations. The concept of binding or tying together usually suggests something that is 'enforced by human authority', making it essentially a legal concept. However, Plato gives it a moral significance, which is translated simply as 'goodness.' With regard to justice, there is thus a shift from the legal aspect to the moral one. The object of the Republic is to enquire into the nature of goodness and the way in which it may be known or understood.

What is Justice, and how can it be realised in human society? This is one of the most fundamental ethical and political questions underlying the *Republic*. Socrates, as Plato's advocate, elicits some typical views of the nature of justice and criticises them as either inadequate or false in the first part of the *Republic,* opening up the whole range of inquiry into justice. Socrates shapes up the discussion, as usual, by making it in a dialogic and dialectic manner wherein many interlocutors are pushed to think on their own and give their own definitions of justice. The interlocutors offer four definitions.

Cephalus suggests the first definition: Justice is "speaking the truth and repaying what one has borrowed". However, Socrates finds this definition which from a traditional moral perspective links justice with honesty and goodness as inadequate. Repaying one's debts, speaking the truth, having good manners, showing proper respect for the gods and elders and so on are unsatisfactory definitions of justice. Socrates refutes this definition by presenting a counterexample. He asks if it is still just to return a weapon that was borrowed from someone who was once insane but has now turned into a madman. According to Socrates, it does not seem to be just as it involves a danger that the insane owner can harm both sides.

Cephalus' son, Polemarchus, gives the second definition while continuing the dialogue along with other interlocutors. According to him, poet Simonides's definition of justice as

- The idea of justice as the central focus of the Republic

- What is justice, and what is a just society?

- Is speaking the truth and repaying the debts justice?

"to render to each his due" is correct and sensible. Cephalus elaborates this statement by defining justice as "treating friends well and enemies badly". Here again, Socrates objects that one may be mistaken in judging others as friends and enemies and may thus end up harming the good people. Upon the objection, Polemarchus revises the definition of justice as "to treat well a friend who is good and to harm an enemy who is bad". Socrates again objects that we cannot harm anyone at all because justice cannot produce injustice. The confused Polemarchus agrees with Socrates that justice, which both sides tacitly agree relates to goodness, cannot cause any harm. The harm can only be caused by injustice.

The dialogue ends here in a negative way, both sides recognising that no definition provided here stands up to the examination of the question "What is justice?". Socrate's intention here is to convince the interlocutors that the definition of justice is more difficult than it appeared at first and that most of the popular opinions, even definitions, we hold in daily life involve inconsistencies. The dialogue also teaches us that definitions based on everyday usage of the word 'justice' only help us understand partially what justice means. That such definitions fail to provide a complete account of what is justice. Thus, dialogue is primarily concerned with the principles of definition. Also, Plato goes beyond a mere exposition of political philosophy by indicating the interlinkage of ethics, politics and epistemology. Specifically, in the dialogue on justice, he brings the core of his epistemological theory "knowledge is justified true belief" and makes a clear distinction between mere beliefs/ opinions and knowledge.

Plato definitely goes beyond the linguistic project of giving definitions to the philosophical project of examining and evaluating social beliefs and views. Platonic dialogues are expressions of the ultimate communication with the most clarity that can happen between humans. And, Plato believes that true communication can only occur if and only if individuals can share the meanings of the words they use. His strong point is that while communications and rhetoric based on false beliefs and assumptions are possible, all of them are limited and can result in dividing people into factions. The definitions that are not as accurate as possible are either arbitrary, too narrow, or too broad and are based on false beliefs and assumptions that humans hold. This issue, according to Plato, curtails the possibility of communication. This is an important point in all

Platonic dialogues vis-à-vis the Sophists' rhetoric against which Plato fought a philosophical battle, especially in his political philosophy.

For example, for Plato, the definition of justice, "treating friends well and enemies badly," is not only inadequate because it is too narrow but also wrong as it is based on a mistaken belief of justice grounded in factionalism. This belief in justice, according to Plato, cannot be associated with the wise ones but with tyrants. Therefore, in the *Republic*, as well as other dialogues, there is a crucial relationship between conceptual analysis and critical evaluation of beliefs and assumptions. The goals of the dialogues are not merely linguistic, aiming to arrive at an adequate verbal definition, but also substantial, to arrive at a right belief. That is, the question 'What is justice' is not only about linguistic usage or about meaning of the word 'justice' but fundamentally about the thing/concept to which the word refers. Towards this end, focus of the second part of Book I is no longer a clarification of ideas but an evaluation of beliefs. Plato aims to do both linguistic and philosophical therapy. In short, Plato did not see definition in his philosophical examinations as a matter of linguistic usage of the word or as an analytic clarity of the language. Rather, definition is a matter of evaluation of beliefs, which becomes the focus of the second part of Book I.

- Conceptual analysis and critical evaluation of beliefs in the Republic

Thrasymachus, a sophist, comes to the centre of the dialogue now. He wants Socrates to look into the facts. As a clever man of affairs and convenience, he derives the definition of justice by looking into the city's configuration of power and making it relative to the interests of the dominant social or political group. "Justice is nothing else than the interest of the stronger". One can see that this is not a definition of justice but rather an identification of justice with either maintenance or observance of the law. This is an expression of his belief that in this practical and imperfect world, the ruling class in the city makes the laws and governs for their own benefits. The democrats make and practice laws in support of democracy while the aristocrats make and practice laws in support of the rule of the well-born and brought up. And the propertied people make and practice laws in support of their business and trades and so on. This suggests the following points: justice is not, at first, a universal moral value but a notion relative to the convenience of the dominant group; justice is in the exclusive interest of the dominant group and is used as a means of oppression and thus is harmful to the powerless. It suggests that there is neither a common good

- There is nothing called justice. Whatever we call justice is the mere interests of the ruling class.

nor harmony of interests. All that exists is a domination of the powerful and the privileged over the helpless, and the moral language of justice is used merely as an instrument to conceal the interests of the dominant group and to make their interests appear universal and ideal. The powerful "declare what they have made – what is to their own advantage – to be just." Thrasymachus affirms his belief about justice here and leaves as if any further debate about justice is impossible.

The discussion between Socrates and his interlocutors is no longer about the meaning of justice. It is about fundamental beliefs and about the way we ought to live. Should we really believe that "justice [obeying laws] is really the good of another, the advantage of the stronger and the ruler, harmful to the one who obeys, while injustice [disobeying laws] is in one's advantage?" Socrates then succeeds in showing Thrasymachus that his position is self-contradictory. The latter leaves the conversation without being fully convinced, and the dialogue is taken over by two young intellectuals, Plato's brothers, Glaucon and Adeimantus. Even though Thrasymachus withdraws, his statement about moral scepticism and relativism, about predominance of power in human relations and about non-existence of the harmony of interests has been received well in the Western philosophical tradition. From this, an argument arises in defence of justice as a universal value and the foundation of the best political order.

To conclude, for Plato, justice at its very core is a balanced or harmonious order that refers to various things, such as individual virtue, order of society and state, and individual rights, in contrast to the claims of general social order. He explains justice, in short, as a combined concept in which many things partake and which has practical implications for individual life, governance and social organisation. Plato's tripartite division of the soul - comprising reason, spirit and appetite - underscores the moral complexity of human nature as well as suggests that true justice of an individual requires the harmonisation of these internal elements. He also draws an analogy between the human soul and the state and argues that a just state mirrors this tripartite structure, with each class corresponding to a part of the soul. Also, according to Plato, an ideal state is ruled by philosopher-kings, the wise individuals who grasp the Forms, especially the Form of the Good. He argues that only philosophers, with their love of wisdom and knowledge of the true nature of reality, are fit to

- Plato's battle against moral relativism and scepticism in the Republic

- Justice is not a stand-alone concept. It is a combined concept.

rule. The philosopher-kings are central to his vision of the ideal state because they govern with wisdom and justice. In the ideal state, justice manifests not only in the distribution of rights and resources but also in the cultivation of virtue among citizens and each member or group performing their duties and enjoying their rights. In short, for Plato, justice is not a standalone concept; rather, it is a harmonious and balanced state of affairs in which various parties stand together. "It is a harmonious balance of duties and rights, and only a society that is composed and organised would be ideal", Colin Bird observes.

Summarized Overview

Humans are social beings, and that makes them confronted with the questions and concerns of living with others. Plato's *Republic* can be seen as the first official philosophical engagement on various human-social issues such as education, individual, social organisation, state, polity, justice, morality, etc. Plato initiated the intellectual discussions on justice through dialogues. Justice, according to him, means harmony or balance between the individual and society. It meant a balance of various parts of the soul, such as appetite, reason, and spirit, at the individual level, as well as a balance of multiple parts or sections of the people with regard to their tasks, responsibilities, and rights as social beings.

Self-Assessment

1. What are the definitions of justice given by various interlocutors, and how did Plato respond to them?

2. How are various concepts and ideas in epistemology, ethics, politics, and metaphysics intertwined in Plato? Elaborate

3. Socratic method aimed at critical thinking and self reflection. Explain

Assignments

1. Discuss the importance of state/polity according to Plato with reference from the Republic

2. Humans are social and political animals. Analyse

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

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UNIT 3
Greek Beginning: Aristotle

Learning Outcomes

By the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- get an overview of Aristotle's concept of *Polis* as the natural institution of humans
- understand Aristotle's theory that man is a political animal and its relevance in socio-political philosophy
- recognise the relationship between the state and the individual
- appreciate the modern criticism against the natural hierarchy justified in Aristotle's political philosophy

Background

Aristotle classifies all knowledge into three categories: theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge, and productive knowledge. This distinction is based on their aims: theoretical knowledge aims at contemplation, productive knowledge aims at creation, and practical knowledge aims at action. Theoretical knowledge is knowledge about things that are unchanging and eternal, such as the principles of logic, physics, and mathematics. It is the study of truth for its own sake. The productive and practical sciences, in contrast, have to do with our daily lives and address our needs as human beings. They deal with things that can change. Productive knowledge is the know-how, the knowledge of how to make a table, chair, house or shoes. At the same time, practical knowledge is the knowledge of how to live and act. Aristotle believes that it is the possession and the use of knowledge or sciences such as ethics and politics that makes it possible for us to live a good life. Ethics and politics deal with human beings as moral agents. While ethics is primarily concerned with the actions of human beings as individuals, politics is concerned with the actions of human beings in communities or city-states. The term politics originates from the Greek term polis, which means city. So, politics in ancient Greece dealt with the city life of Greek city-states and the people residing in the area.

Aristotle's distinction between practical and theoretical knowledge is in terms of the level of precision that can be attained when studying them. Political and moral knowledge, Aristotle believes, does not or cannot have the same degree of accuracy or certainty as mathematics and Logic. Aristotle says: "Problems of what is noble and just, which politics examines, present so much variety and irregularity that some people believe that they exist only by convention and not by nature…. Therefore, in a discussion of such subjects, which has to start with a basis of this kind, we must be satisfied to indicate the truth with a rough and general sketch. When the subject and the basis of a discussion consist of matters that hold good only as a general rule, but not always, the conclusions reached must be of the same order." He emphasises that the principles and definitions of geometry, such as a point, a line or a plane, are fixed and unchanged for everyone once they are known. And they can be given precisely anywhere at any time. However, that is not the case with the definition of something like justice. It can only be known generally without any fixed and unchanging definition that will always be correct. This means that Aristotle takes a different approach from that of his successors, such as Hobbes and Kant. Aristotle suggested that one cannot give a fixed set of rules to be followed when ethical and political decisions are made.

Keywords

Polis, Nature, Partnership, Part and Whole, Reason, Speech

Discussion

- Aristotle's interest in biology and nature and its influence
- Plato's interest in mathematics and its influence

Aristotle's philosophy needs to be understood in the background of Plato. At times, he adds to Plato's method and philosophy, and he takes a diversion from Plato. Aristotle's foundational work, *Politics*, like his other works, takes the form of a treatise, not a dialogue, and its style and form are quite different from that of Plato's dialogues. Apart from philosophy in the strict sense, while Plato was mainly interested in mathematics, Aristotle was interested in biology and nature, and their political philosophies reflect this difference in many ways.

Murray observes the above fundamental difference in their approach to political philosophy: "Thus, Plato believed that in politics it was possible to establish principles having the precision and certainty of mathematics, whereas Aristotle believed that in politics, as in biology, careful and patient empirical enquiry was the only way of arriving at reliable

generalisations. Plato believed that the apprehension of the Form of the Good would reveal exactly how a community ought to be organised and governed. In contrast, Aristotle thought that the right organisation for any given state could only be discovered by careful examination of its other characteristics."

1.3.1 What is Polity? How Did it Come into Being?

The *Politics* begins by defining its subject matter, the city or political partnership. The Greek word for city is *polis*, which gives us English words like "politics" and "policy". Before defining the polis or the city-states, which were the ruling regimes in ancient Greece, Aristotle explained the purpose of the city. The purpose of the city is described in terms of the partnership. Aristotle says: "It is clear that all partnerships aim at some good, and that the partnership that is most authoritative of all and embraces all the others does so particularly and aims at the most authoritative good of all. This is what is called the city or the political partnership". In ancient Greece, in Aristotle's time, the important political entities were cities which controlled surrounding territories that were farmed.

Aristotle's definition of the polity or political community as a partnership is significant. Because it comes in contrast to the usual way of defining the polity by the laws that it follows and practices or by the group that holds power or as an entity controlling a particular territory. The concept of the sovereignty of the nation, which has become pervasive in political life today, was not anticipated in Aristotle's political philosophy. Political community as a partnership means that citizens of a political community are partners, and as in the case of any other alliance, they pursue a common good. Aristotle conceptualises the city as the most authoritative and the highest good. The most authoritative and highest good of all, according to Aristotle, is the virtue and happiness of the citizens. And, the definite purpose of the city is to make it possible for the citizens to achieve this virtue and happiness. Polis pursues the common good.

How the cities have historically come into being is another important question Aristotle raises in *Politics*. The first partnership, according to Aristotle, must have happened between "persons who cannot exist without one another". Aristotle considers two pairs of people in this case, male and female, for the sake of reproduction and the 'naturally ruling

and the ruled on account of preservation'. Here, Aristotle refers to slavery and justifies it. He means to say here that the naturally ruling enslaver and the naturally ruled enslaved person need each other if they want to preserve themselves. In his view, slavery is a kind of partnership which benefits both the enslaver and the enslaved person. He says that these pairs of people come together and form a household which exists for the purpose of meeting the needs of daily life, such as food, shelter, clothing, and so forth. While the first pair is reasonable and justifiable for the modern reader, the second pair becomes unjustifiable and attracts criticism.

Over time, family expanded, and the families came into contact with other families, eventually combining and forming a village. According to Aristotle, the partnership then spreads to villages, which are better forms of collaboration than families as they are more self-sufficient. Unlike families, in larger villages, people started to specialise in a wider variety of tasks and develop skills in cooking, medicine, building, soldiering, etc., which they could not grow in a smaller group. Thus, the residents of a village lived a better and more comfortable life, with more access to more goods and services, than those who live in families. The families combining and forming a city was one of the most significant changes in the history of human communities and their natural tendency for partnership. A city is not just a big village but is fundamentally different: "The partnership arising from the union of several villages that is complete is the city. It reaches a level of full self-sufficiency, so to speak, and while coming into being for the sake of living, it exists for the sake of living well". While the cities are created for the sake of a more comfortable life, Aristotle focuses on the uniqueness of cities in making it possible for people to live well.

For Aristotle, 'living well' meant primarily leading a life of happiness and virtue and subsequently fulfilling one's telos or purpose. It did not mean the typical life of comfort, material satisfaction and professional success. Therefore, life in the city, in Aristotle's view, is not something extra for human beings; rather, it is something necessary for anyone to be a complete human. In theorising about the city, his particular concern is with the men and their fulfilment. "He who is without a city through nature rather than chance is either a mean sort or superior to man," Aristotle says. To put it in his own different words, the self-sufficient one without participating in a city is

either a beast or a god. Aristotle's point here is that humans are not capable of becoming gods. Still, they are capable of becoming beasts, and in fact, the worst kind of beasts: "For just as man is the best of the animals when completed when separated from law and adjudication he is the worst of all". Outside of the context of life in a properly constructed city, human happiness and well-being are impossible. At the very beginning of *Politics,* Aristotle shows the link between ethics and politics and the importance of a city/polis in making it possible for the citizens to live well.

The concept of 'living well' needs to be understood in the context of Aristotle's ethics. The primary aim or goal of Aristotle's ethical enquiry in his *Nicomachean Ethics* is polity. It is not only that Aristotle considers ethics and politics as inherently related fields but also ethics as coming before polity/politics. In Aristotle, ethics is the foundation of his concept of politics and the establishment of the *polis* or city-state. At the same time, political science or social science is a field which studies the good for human beings. To put it in other words, Aristotle finds a proper answer to his foundational ethical question of "how to lead a happy life" in the polis/city as he sees that polis completes the human potential and fulfils them. Copleston says, "We might say that he treats individual ethical science first and then political ethical science in politics second."

1.3.2 On Human Nature: Man is a Political Animal

Aristotle's concept of nature has to do with his concepts of 'ends' or 'telos' and that of the final cause. Aristotle views 'nature' essentially as a biological conception: "The nature of a thing is its end. For what each thing is when fully developed, we call its nature, whether we are speaking of a man, a horse, or a family." Murray observes that the nature of a thing is not what the thing is at this moment but what it is capable of becoming or transforming. The nature of a thing is not static but a developing conception with potential. According to Aristotle, just as in biology, the nature of a seed can only discovered and revealed by observation of its growth, so in politics, the nature of a state/polity can only be discovered or revealed by observation of its development, tendencies and patterns. After defining the nature of a thing as its 'end', Aristotle adds to it a significant proposition: 'the final cause and end of a thing is the best.'

- Ethics as the foundation of politics in Aristotle
- Political, ethical science as the subject matter of *Politics*

- The nature of things is their end.

If the nature of something is its end, state or polis is the natural end of the man. The state is a creation of nature, and man is by nature a 'political animal.' Aristotle famously states: "Hence, it is evident that the state is a creation of nature and that man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state, is either above humanity or below it; he is the 'tribeless, lawless, heartless one,' whom Homer denounces—the outcast who is a lover of war; he may be compared to a bird which flies alone." This implies that human beings are destined to live in socio-political partnerships and collaborations and that political orientation is their intrinsic quality. Aristotle proceeds: "the proof that the state is a creation of nature and prior to the individual is that the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficing; and therefore, he is like a part in relation to the whole."

Aristotle's assertion that "man is a political animal" became a dictum in later political philosophy. If the modern philosopher Descartes defined humans as thinking beings, the ancient philosopher Aristotle was the first to describe them as political beings. He not only posited that life in a polity is akin to life in a natural state for humans but also posited that life outside the city is akin to birds flying alone - outcasts devoid of the benefits and structures of communal life.

Aristotle compares and contrasts humans' lives together in groups with that of bees and herd animals. He observes that humans live in groups like bees and herd animals. However, humans are special in their capacity for speech, which is called logos in Greek. As it is well known in the history of philosophy, logos is more than speech; it is also reason. Aristotle makes a linkage between the use of reason, speech and moral reasoning with regard to humans, especially in the context of polity. That means the speech, which is assigned to men by nature, is meant to reveal what is advantageous and harmful. And, by doing so, it is meant to reveal what is good and bad, right and wrong, just and unjust and to differentiate between them. "Speech serves to reveal the advantageous and the harmful and hence also the just and unjust. For it is peculiar to man as compared to the other animals that he alone has a perception of good and bad and just and unjust and other things of this sort, and partnership in these things is what makes a household and a city."

One of the most significant points to be noted is that Aristotle's theory of polis/city and the political nature of man is based on his concept of justice. The idea of justice is pervasive.

Sidebar notes:
- The natural end of a man is polity.
- One who lives outside the polis is either above humanity (God) or below it (bird)
- Cartesian thinking and Aristotle's political being
- With speech, use of reason and moral reasoning, humans become special from other herd animals.

To put it more concretely, the animals living in groups, such as bees, goats, and cows, cannot speak reason or conceptualise justice. They do not need this ability either. They are able to live together without being concerned about assessing and determining what is good and bad, right and wrong, just and unjust. The animals can live without legislating laws to enforce justice among them. Human beings, for better or worse, cannot do this. This realisation makes it possible for us both to live together and to pursue justice as part of the virtuous lives we are meant to live. "The virtue of justice is a thing belonging to the city. For adjudication is an arrangement of the political partnership, and adjudication is judgment as to what is just". Only discovering and living according to the right laws, acting with justice and exercising the virtues allow the human society to function. This not only brings success to the political community but also causes to flourish our virtue and happiness.

1.3.3 Individual and the State: Which is Prior and Supreme?

Part or the whole, which is prior? Which comes first? This is an essential question in Aristotle's philosophy. In *Politics*, he addresses this by starting with the family, the fundamental social unit. Families combine to form villages, and villages combine to create states that are the ultimate whole, according to Aristotle. While the state is later chronologically (in time) than the family, it is prior in nature to even the individual in Aristotle's view. The state is prior to the individual because fully developed human nature is realised within the context of a polity or political system. There is, therefore, a sense in which the city "is prior by nature to the household and each of us". In that sense, a mature and fully developed human society is a state, and no individual can fulfil their purpose outside of this context. Here, it is even possible to say that Aristotle prioritises Politics to his Ethics, as Politics is the whole.

An individual's relationship to the city is akin to the relationship of a part of the body to the whole body. The destruction of the entire body would also mean the destruction of each of its parts: "If the whole (body) is destroyed, there will not be a foot or a hand". Aristotle states that just as a hand is not able to survive without being attached to a functioning body, so too, an individual cannot survive without being connected to a city/polity. Presumably, Aristotle also implies that the reverse is not true; a body can survive the loss of a foot or a hand,

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- Justice is the centre of Aristotle's theories of the polis

- The whole or the state is prior and supreme.

- An individual's relationship is akin to the relationship of a part of the body to the whole body

although not without consequences. Thus, the individual needs the city more than the city needs any of its citizens; as Aristotle says: "One ought not even consider that a citizen belongs to himself, but rather that all belong to the city; for each individual is a part of the city" (1337a26).

1.3.4 Natural Hierarchy: Modern Criticism

Following his predecessor Plato, Aristotle also upheld that different classes or sections of citizens have functions of differing value, place and importance in society. This comes as a natural implication of Aristotle's organic theory of the state, which observes that the state is an organic whole/end purported to complete or fulfil the human potentials wherein different sections/classes are organically or biologically working towards that goal. Thus, Aristotle did not find anything wrong in a social structure founded on natural hierarchy. As much as partnerships (polity) are natural to humans, slavery is also natural to them, he viewed. On this ground, Aristotle defended slavery, which was accepted as a normal and essential element in the social life of Ancient Greece.

Aristotle justifies slavery and finds it just in his statement that the sort of war that involves hunting those human beings "who are naturally suited to be ruled but [are] unwilling…[is] by nature just". In the discussion of the household, Aristotle says that slavery serves the interest of both the enslaver and the enslaved person. He views the enslaved people as those who are different from other men, like the soul is different from the body or man from the beast. The enslaved people are those who are capable of belonging to another and whose best work, by nature, is 'use of their body'. The striking portion of the justification of slavery from Aristotle is his observation that enslaved people are those who do not have logos – reason and speech. Those who are enslaved people by nature do not have the full ability to reason, and they should be set to labour by the people who can reason. Labour is their use, and they are 'living tools.'

Aristotle also views women and talks about forms of rule over women and children. As in the case of the master's rule over the enslaved person and human's rule over plants and animals, Aristotle explains man's rule over women in terms of natural hierarchies. He believed that the males are, by nature, more expert at leading than the females. Aristotle attributed the quality of the ruling to the males by nature. As much as humans are political animals by nature, the males are rulers by

- Aristotle's finding that slavery is just and justified.

- Aristotle on enslaved people as living tools

- Aristotle on women and their natural inferiority

nature, and the relation of male to female is by nature a relation of superior to inferior and ruler to ruled, he upheld. Like in the case of the enslaver and the enslaved person, here too, the difference between the ruler and the ruled is that the former has reason while the latter does not have, according to Aristotle. "The slave is wholly lacking the deliberative element; the female has it, but it lacks authority; the child has it, but it is incomplete."

> • Modern view of equality contradicts and rejects Aristotle's natural hierarchy.

Aristotle's approval of inherent inferiority and subordination of a large proportion of human beings has attracted severe criticism from modern scholars in political philosophy and theory. As it is evident, Aristotle's view about the natural inferiority of the enslaved people and the women comes in stark contrast to the modern views of intrinsic equality and justice to all. Also, the disapproval of anyone's ability to reason and speak can never be accepted by a contemporary mindset. In the modern view, nobody is inferior to anyone, and everyone carries equal rights in society and before the law. The renowned Philosopher of the twentieth century, Bertrand Russell, questioned Aristotle for his ignorance of female teeth. However, he had two wives since Aristotle had maintained the belief that women had fewer teeth and hence needed more time to eat and, therefore, to remain at home.

Summarized Overview

The state is a natural institution and is a kind of organism. It is not a mere collection of its parts, such as individuals, but an organic combination of them, suggesting that none of the parts can be what it is once separated from the rest. A leg is no longer a leg once it is detached from the body; it exists as a leg only in a whole body. That is, a leg can be defined by its purpose, and its purpose can be fulfilled only when it is part of a body. Aristotle's point is that an individual cannot fulfil his purpose unless they are part of a State. As an organism, in the case of human beings, there are certain essential features; hearts and feet can no longer exist the way it is if separated from the body; the health of the whole depends upon the health of the parts and vice versa, some parts such as heart and kidney have a more fundamental and essential function to perform than other parts. The Organic Theory of the state upholds all these propositions as true of a political society. Thus, it becomes more than a mere collection of individuals but has an organic unity of its own. It is for this natural end of the state that Aristotle believes that there can be no real conflict between its interests and the true interests of its constituent members. Different members, or classes of members, have other functions to perform and various levels of importance.

Self-Assessment

1. What was the purpose of the city coming into existence according to Aristotle?
2. Justice is an ever-pervasive theme in Aristotle's theory of state and man. Explain
3. Elaborate the concept of nature in Aristotle when he upholds that state is a natural
4. How do you see Aristotle's concept of natural hierarchy?

Assignments

1. Critically evaluate the debate "whole is prior to the part" versus "part is prior to the whole" in the context of Aristotle's theory of state and individual.
2. Man is a political animal. Elaborate
3. How man's political partnership is different from herd animal's partnerships and life in groups

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BLOCK 2
Modern Social Contract Theory

UNIT 1

Hobbesian Social Contract Theory

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- have an overview of Thomas Hobbes' Social Contract theory
- get a grasp on the key concepts in Hobbes's theoretical framework
- identify the characteristic features of Hobbesian Social Contract Theory
- set a ground for the comparison between the other competing theories in the social contract tradition

Background

Political philosophy examines the relationship between the government and the populace. Numerous hypotheses exist that seek to elucidate the genesis of the state. Understanding the connection between society and the state requires knowledge of the state's origin. The study of Thomas Hobbes' theory on the emergence of the state holds particular significance due to its importance. The state is a political entity that exists across various countries and cultures. Its primary purpose as an organisation is to promote security and maintain order within society. Within the framework of a country or nation, a state commonly denotes a political entity that exercises supreme authority over a specific region and its inhabitants. States often possess autonomous governance, legal systems, and establishments that are accountable for the administration and provision of services to their populace.

Additionally, they may own distinctive symbols, such as a flag or an anthem, and actively engage in global affairs as autonomous entities. A political state is a basic entity in the field of government and international affairs. A nation-state is characterised by a demarcated geographical area governed by an independent authority that possesses the ability to create and enforce legislation. States are fundamental units of the contemporary political system, acting as the main participants in the global society. The Westphalia

system, a theory of international law that originated in the 17th century, establishes that states have absolute authority over their territories and are entitled to administer them according to their own discretion.

States generally have distinct defining attributes. Sovereignty is a vital component that pertains to the state's ultimate and autonomous power within its geographical limits. Furthermore, states possess a particular population comprising the individuals who dwell inside their jurisdiction and are obligated to adhere to their legal regulations. A state is typically accompanied by a multitude of institutions that preserve and maintain its governance. These institutions encompass the executive branch, comprising the head of state and the government, who are accountable for making decisions and executing policies. Legislative bodies, such as parliaments or congresses, are responsible for the creation of laws, whereas judicial systems are responsible for the interpretation and enforcement of those laws. States engage in diplomatic interactions with each other, which involve discussions, treaties, and participation in international organisations. The field of international relations centres on the examination of power dynamics, conflicts, alliances, and cooperation among nations. It is important to mention that not all political entities are regarded as states. Regions or provinces inside a bigger country may have their own administrative structures and a certain degree of autonomy, but they lack complete sovereignty. In general, the political state acts as the fundamental basis of contemporary government, offering a structure for legislation, maintenance of public order, and management of international affairs. The establishment of a structure ensures the safeguarding and regulation of its population, enabling the exercise of rights and duties within a certain geographical area.

This unit explores some of the questions that are central to the study of political institutions, such as the origins of the state, the conditions prior to its development, and the mechanisms that contributed to its construction and evolution. We will adhere to the ideas put forward by Thomas Hobbes, who has made a significant theoretical impact in addressing the inquiries above.

Keywords

State, State of Nature, Sovereignty, Leviathan, Social Contract

2.1.1 The Origin of State: Principal Approaches

There has been a very lengthy period for which states have existed throughout human history. From a philosophical point of view, this gives rise to an intriguing question: where did it originate? Throughout history, what exactly led to the establishment of the state as a political and social organisational structure? What are the contributing elements that contributed to its creation? In what ways did the establishment of a state emerge from the various factors that contributed to its formation? There are no straightforward responses to a significant number of these problems, and the academic community's understanding of this subject is a complex one. The ambiguity that exists in this matter is actually a blessing in disguise since it can open the door to a variety of perspectives from which the subject matter can be looked at. There are a number of different approaches that can be considered to address the problem.

The following is a list of some of the significant methods or theoretical frameworks that would be considered important. A) The theory of divine origin, b) The theory of force, and c) The theory of social contract. In order to address the issue of where the state came from, these frameworks provide a variety of potential solutions. Each of them takes different perspectives when approaching the problem. Throughout this discussion, we will briefly examine each of these major frameworks in order to acquire an understanding of their distinct positions regarding this matter. There are different theoretical frameworks to address the issue.

One of the solutions is that the all-powerful God forms the state for the purpose of enhancing the well-being of human society and assuring its smooth operation. The overarching goal is to develop a harmonious relationship among people. The divine genesis theory is the oldest theory about the formation of the state. It is also known as the divine right of Kings Theory. According to proponents of this theory, the state was not created by man's efforts. It is the work of God. The King, who rules over the state, is an earthly agent of God. The King receives his authority from God, and he is solely accountable to God for all of his actions. God ordains obedience to the King, and breaking it is a sin. The King is above the law, and no subject has the right to challenge his power or actions. The King is solely accountable to God.

- The Origin of the state is a fuzzy area of enquiry

- One Problem and different approaches

- The state as a God-given entity

This investigation has intrinsic limitations since it is unable to propose a solution that is both realistic and historically grounded to the problem brought about by the establishment of the state. Intervention of supernatural forces in the explain this phenomenon lacks practicality, despite the fact that it is theoretically feasible for God to intervene in the construction of a huge political body such as a state. This criterion may make it more difficult to have a meaningful understanding of the phenomenon that is being investigated. This is because the state is largely a human creation.

- Theoratical the conflict between human agency devine intervension

Although the divine idea is completely invalidated as the genesis of the state, there are some positive aspects to it. The theory's main benefit was that it encouraged subjects to be disciplined and law-abiding at a time when these were urgent necessities in those anarchic conditions. This theory also established the moral duty of rulers since they were endowed with a divine mandate to rule to the complete satisfaction of the heavens.

- The moral duty of the ruler and the law-abiding of the subjects are ensured.

Yet another theory is the Force theory. The individuals who advocated for the force theory held the belief that the establishment and growth of the state were founded on force, namely the use of force by those who were powerful against those who were weak and the consequent control the former exercised over the latter. Consequently, in situations in which the powerful group surpassed the weaker group, the powerful group became the master and reigned over the weaker group. The powerful group was given the authority to rule, and the population that was federated became their subjects.

- Might determines the right to control

In doing so, it highlights the fact that the origin of the state lies in the subjugation of the weak to the influential. One who is physically stronger can kidnap and enslave those who are weaker. As a result of this success in attracting a larger number of followers, over whom the strongest who exercised unchallenged power, was elevated to the position of tribe chief. The chief thus acquires the right to rule over the population. As a result of this process of conquest and dominance, the powerful were able to triumph over the weak, and this process continued until the successful tribe was able to establish dominion over a certain territory.

- The most powerful rule over the population and the territory

A multitude of criticisms is levelled against the theory of

force. To begin with, the establishment of the state was not solely the result of coercion; religion, politics, family, and the evolutionary process have all contributed. Thus, it is equivalent to committing the fallacy of attributing blame to a single cause when all factors contributed to the state's formation to assert that force is its origin. Temporary state formation can occur via coercive methods. In order to sustain it, however, additional measures are necessary.

Moreover, the theory of force is in opposition to the universally recognised principle put forth by Thomas Hill Green, which asserts that "the foundation of the state is will, not force. "It is not possible to attain permanent states by employing bayonets and daggers." It is crucial that the voluntary consensus of the general public be achieved. In conclusion, furthermore, the theory of force is in opposition to the notion of personal freedom. As soon as one recognises that force underpins a state, the expectation of liberty within that state becomes unattainable. In contrast to democratic systems, the theory of force might experience temporary prevalence during periods of despotism.

Ultimately, the force theory should be dismissed because the establishment of the state is not based on coercion but rather on political awareness. Without a pervasive political consciousness among the population, the establishment of an entity is unattainable. Given the innate political nature of human beings, this is indeed true. The state's structure was profoundly imbued with this political understanding. To summarise, R. N. Gilchrist's remark asserts that all institutions, including the government and state, are products of human political awareness originating from the recognition of a moral objective.

Due to the respective inherent weaknesses of the theories of divine origin and the force theory, a more viable theory which does not pose such difficulties becomes a requirement. Such a theory should reflect the fact that consensus among the participants of the political formation plays a crucial role in the process rather than divine intervention and or physical force. The awareness of the members who are involved in the process of the formation of the state is important since such a process is a willful one. People consent to initiate such a process and reap the fruits of the same. The beneficiaries of such processes are thus many rather than very few, as envisaged by the force theory and the divine origin theory.

Therefore, the new theory would be predicated on the idea that in order for individuals to participate, they must be willing to do so rather than being coerced by those in authority or by God himself. In order for the masses to improve their state, it is necessary to accept the fact that there is something from which they desire to escape. There is a condition of affairs that is in a transitional phase, and they desired to enter it in order to ensure that their lives would be protected more effectively.

- Willful participation is the key to the formation of the state.

The use of an empirical historical perspective is one alternate approach that might be taken to account for the consensual formation of the state. The goal is to investigate historical records in order to ascertain the specific beginnings of the political entity that is commonly referred to as the state over time. Due to the fact that we are unable to provide a conclusive explanation for the earliest instance of state formation in the course of human history, our inquiry is limited in its scope. Throughout human history, the idea of a state has been expressed in a number of different ways.

- The Empirical Historical approach to the enquiry has limitations.

An alternative framework to the enquiry of the origin of the state can thus be channelled through another strand of the historical approach, which may be called the symbolic historical approach. The difference between the empirical historical approach and the symbolic historical approach is that the former takes into account the actual historical events and draws conclusions based on them. The symbolic approach, on the other hand, does not delve into the actual history. Rather, it considers the likely accounts of non-empirical history and generates narratives that perform explanatory functions.

- Symbolic history as a theoretical tool for explaining the origin of the state.

2.1.2 The Origin of State: The Social Contract Tradition

The way in which the state was formed as a result of the consensus among the masses can be very well captured with the help of a symbolic narrative. Such a narrative is termed a social contract theory. This general term refers to the approaches which identify the common theme of a 'contract' as a result of which the political entity called the state came into existence. Different thinkers offer different versions of the social contract narrative. They vary in details and content, yet all of them stick to the idea that the emergence of the state is the result of a social contract. Thomas Hobbes is a pioneer of the social contract tra-

- There are many social contract theories, and each varies in minute details.

dition. Now we shall discuss Hobbes' ideas in this connection.

In an effort to explain the beginnings of the state, the social contract theory is one of the hypotheses that have evolved. According to this theory, the state is an artificial organisation or mechanism that was built by men via mutual consent in order to attain particular goals such as peace, security, and prosperity. During the 17th and 18th centuries, this concept became increasingly popular, which ultimately led to the view of the divine origin of the state being displaced. Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, two English political philosophers who lived in the 17th century, and Jean Jacques Rousseau, a French political philosopher who lived in the 18th century, are the most well-known individuals with whom the concept of the social contract was associated.

During his lifetime, Thomas Hobbes, a philosopher who lived in England during the 17th century, was exposed to the prevalent tensions and uncertainties that were currently present in the country. These occurrences, including the English Civil War, were captured by his memory. In order to explain the idea that the monarch ought to have sole authority to secure the existence of the nation in a state of tranquillity and protection, he gave a detailed explanation of the concept of the social compact. Through the publication of his well-known work *Leviathan* in the year 1651, he demonstrated his viewpoints.

When considering the possibility that the establishment of the state was the consequence of a social contract, it is of utmost significance to determine whether or not any institutions existed earlier than that in the history of humanity. Additionally, it is necessary to have a comprehensive understanding of the manner in which humans lived during such a phase, or, to put it another way, the human condition at that specific period. Whether or not there was any institution similar to the state or a prototype of the state that existed at that time, or whether or not the political climate that existed at that time was utterly chaotic, are other important considerations that come up within the scope of the Hobbesian framework.

2.1.3 The Hobbesian State of Nature

Hobbes maintained the view that humans had originally existed in a pre-existing State of Nature. It was devoid of any organisation, laws, or discipline of any kind among its popula-

Social Contract theories belong to the Liberal tradition.

Thomas Hobbes is an influential thinker in the Social Contract Tradition.

The key questions in Hobbes' theory

tion. Hobbes was of the opinion that this represented the state of affairs that existed for humankind prior to the establishment of the state. The state of nature is the condition that Hobbes sees as being associated with humanity back then. The state of nature is not a political institution as such; in fact, there are no political institutions existed in the state of nature.

Nonhuman creatures who shared their environment with the people who lived in this condition of nature were violent, self-centred, and selfish, just like the people who lived in this condition! When they did interact with one another, they conducted themselves in a hostile and extremely aggressive manner. It was the wellbeing of the individual that was the primary focus of their attention. Back then, there was not as much of a widespread concern for the wellbeing of other people. They were completely unfamiliar with the ideas of friendship, love, and sympathy due to their incomplete emotional development.

Not only were they completely indifferent to the feelings of other people, but they were also ready to commit acts of robbery and murder. It was a time when men were mistrustful of one another and filled with hatred and violence; civilisation had not yet developed; life was uncertain, and the concept of might was right. The circumstances were quite gloomy and unfortunate. Therefore, Hobbes was of the opinion that the state of nature was a state of perpetual war, which he defined as "a state in which every man is the enemy of every man and life was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

Hobbes contended that humans exhibited similar behaviour to that of other animals. Similar to ants and bees, humans gravitated towards favourable conditions and avoided barriers. The environmental circumstances thus influenced human behaviour. Since the state of nature was not conducive to human survival on the surface of the planet, it was not at all favourable for human beings to be in that state. The members were always in a position of permanent insecurity because the state of perpetual war always created an element of fear among them, and it caused them to remain in a state of terror. In every aspect of life, including life, belongings, relationships, and so on, there was no guarantee of anything. There was the least scope for a peaceful community life. These realisations made the humans in the state of nature start rethinking the entire set-up.

People yearned to flee the harsh conditions of nature and

head to a more favourable environment, one in which their lives would be protected and their safety guaranteed. It was just the kind of condition that would make the improvement of life. This was such a significant issue because the circumstances in which they found themselves did not allow for the flourishing of human beings in any aspect of life. Thus they gathered together, came to an agreement among themselves, and established the state in order to be able to prevail over the awful circumstances and hazardous situations that they were living in.

- The consensual formation of the state

All of the people's rights were transferred to the ruler in accordance with the terms of the agreement that was reached. On the other hand, they were guaranteed tranquillity and security. From the perspective of the Hobbesian idea of social contract, the monarch was not a signatory to the pact. A consensus was reached among the people themselves. To put it another way, the covenant was only signed by the people. As a result of the ruler acquiring control of the situation, the sovereignty was transferred to the ruler, and the ruler became the sovereign of the problem.

- The making of the Sovereign

The power, previously dispersed among the people, has now been consolidated in the hands of the king. The centralisation of power is a process that the people believed would guarantee them a favourable quality of life by safeguarding their rights. Additionally, the formation of power may be observed, as the individuals in the state of nature lacked power. The only resource they possessed was physical strength, which they relied on to safeguard their existence. This manifestation of power through physical exertion has transitioned into a distinct form of power that does not necessarily require the utilisation of physical force.

- From Physical power to Sovereign Power

They willingly consented to submit to his power in exchange for the freedom and security that they desired. Peace and safety are anticipated to be brought about as a result of this agreement. In light of the fact that the monarch is not a party to the contract, he was not in any way obligated to comply with any condition that might be imposed on him. Because of the unrestricted power he possessed, he was able to enact any legislation he desired and then force it upon the general populace. He was able to exert power without any restrictions ever being placed on him.

- The Sovereign stands outside the covenant.

As a result of relinquishing their rights, the individuals

were obligated to comply without questioning. Thus, the Sovereign monarch or king holds absolute authority that is boundless, untransferable, and indivisible. The ruler has the authority to safeguard the rights of the people. In the event of any disagreement between various factions within the population, they are not entitled to establish authority or engage in vigilantism. The monarch, as the custodian of the law, possesses the exclusive authority to enforce the law in order to establish peace. This perspective can be regarded as an outlook that Hobbes formulates based on his political observations, as well as being a symbolic historical narrative.

Hobbes emphasised why men needed to have a powerful ruling body in order to defend themselves from both internal and external influences. He believed that the most effective way to meet men was to establish a government in the form of a monarchy. Leviathan is the name given to such a monarch by Hobbes. The name literally refers to a gigantic sea monster. Interestingly, Hobbes' magnum opus in political philosophy is also titled Leviathan. The primary focus of *Leviathan* centred on Hobbes' arguments and defences in favour of a government formed in the monarchical form.

The view that conflict and anarchy were the natural states that humanity was born into was one that Thomas Hobbes maintained. He believed that a powerful monarchy was the most successful form of governance because it could effectively protect its population. He thought this to be the case because monarchies could protect their citizens. This is a clear indication of Hobbes's position, which is often interpreted as a conservative theory. A number of scholars consider Hobbes to be a member of the conservative school of thought within the Social Contract tradition, as opposed to the liberal schools of thought.

Another reason for such an interpretation is that Hobbes argues that the people cannot take back their power from the monarch or the ruler. The power to rule the masses was given to the king through the consensus and the hypothetical covenant made by the people. Even if the ruler acts unjustly, the people cannot call back the ruler. Such a view, combined with the idea that monarchy is the best form of government, makes Hobbes's view a conservative one. The freedom of the people within such a system of governance is limited on the one hand, and on the other, the right to govern once vested in the monarch cannot be taken back.

- People's intervention in law enforcement is limited.

- Leviathan, the gigantic monster, the monarch and the book

- Monarchy is the most effective form of governance.

- Hobbes' Conservative Social Contract Framework

Summarized Overview

The origin of the state as a political and social organisation has long been discussed. Divine genesis, force, and social contract theories address this issue. The divine origin theory holds that God established the state to improve society and ensure seamless operation. This hypothesis presupposes a metaphysical belief in supernatural forces, which limits it. The force theory holds that powerful groups ruled weaker groups to construct and grow the state. The weak were subjugated by the powerful, who ruled and federated the populace. The strictest rule over the population and territory is the strongest. The origin of the state is complex and involves multiple perspectives and techniques. Divine genesis has various advantages, yet it may not explain the occurrence realistically or historically. However, force theory emphasises power dynamics and weak subjection by the powerful. Since religion, politics, family, and evolutionary processes influence state formation, the theory of force cannot explain it. It also contradicts the idea that will, not coercion, underpins the state. The force hypothesis opposes individual liberty and political awareness since states are founded on consensual consent, not coercion. A better hypothesis emphasises consent over supernatural intervention or physical force in political development. A new theory should avoid the shortcomings of others and emphasise voluntary participation over force. Historical empirical approaches can be utilised to study state origins, but their reach is limited. Alternative frameworks include symbolic historical methods, which consider non-empirical history.

Social contract theories, which attribute the state's formation to a "contract", thus were offered. Thomas Hobbes is one of the famous social contract theorists. 17th-century English philosopher Thomas Hobbes influenced the Social Contract Tradition. He felt that a social contract created the state; hence, it was important to find any existing institutions or precursors. Hobbes' argument centres on state of nature's disorganisation and lack of political institutions. It was violent, self-centred, and selfish, and people were hostile to each other. Hobbes believed this state was a continual battle where everyone was the enemy of everyone, and life was solitary, poor, ugly, brutish, and short. People fled the harsh conditions of nature to find a better life. They founded a state to enhance their lives. Hobbes' theory emphasises the necessity of historical context and social contract theories in protecting the state's citizens. The Hobbsian social contract says that the ruler received the people's rights in exchange for peace and security. The treaty was unsigned by the monarch, but the people accepted it, making him sovereign. The king gained power and was not bound by any conditions. The people accepted the king's sovereignty for freedom and security. The monarch enforced the law to maintain peace with total, indivisible power. Hobbes believed a strong government was needed to fight against internal and external pressures. He named the government Leviathan after a huge sea monster. Hobbes believed that humanity was born into war and chaos and that a strong monarchy was the best form of government. He said that the people could not seize power from the king or ruler since they had forged a consensus and notional pact to rule the masses. This conservative concept of governance implies that the monarch's power to govern cannot be reclaimed, limiting people's freedom. In spite

of the fact that all three philosophers agreed on the general framework of the theory, it is important to emphasise that their explanations and conclusions were different.

Self-Assessment

1. Why does Hobbes think that there was a need for a transition from the state of nature to that of the state?

2. Does the Hobbesian framework allow the subjects to take back the power which they exchanged with the monarch?

3. Why does Hobbes present a symbolic history rather than an actual human history for the introduction of his social contract framework?

Assignments

1. Discuss the concept of the State of nature in Hobbes' political philosophy.

2. Analyse the idea of *Leviathan* in Hobbes, keeping in view the notion of sovereignty.

3. Describe the salient features of Hobbesian Social Contract theory.

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UNIT 2
Lockean Social Contract Theory

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to

- have an overview of John Locke's Social Contract theory
- get a grasp on the key concepts in Locke's theoretical framework
- identify the characteristic features of Locke's Social Contract Theory
- set a ground for the comparison between the other competing theories in the social contract tradition

Background

As a result of the utter harshness of the state of nature, Hobbes believed that it was necessary to have an absolute power, which he referred to as the Leviathan, the Sovereign. As a result of the fact that the state of nature was absolutely intolerable, sensible persons would be willing to submit themselves even to unlimited government in order to get away from it. The state of nature is a totally distinct kind of location, according to John Locke, who lived from 1632 to 1704; his argument regarding the social contract and the nature of men's relationship to power is quite different from one another. In spite of the fact that Locke, like practically all other social contract theorists, employs Hobbes' methodological technique of the state of nature, he does so for a very different purpose. The social contract and the ability of citizens to rebel against their king were two of Locke's most important ideas. Locke's arguments were also extremely influential. Locke's most significant and impactful political writings are found in his *Two Treatises on Government*. The initial book primarily focuses on countering Robert Filmer's thesis in *Patriarcha*, which claimed that political authority sprang from religious authority, sometimes referred to as the Divine Right of Kings, a prevalent belief in seventeenth-century England. Locke's second book presents his own perspective on the purposes and rationale for civil government, titled *An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government.*

Discussion

2.2.1 The State of Nature in Locke

According to Locke, life in the natural condition was pleasant and decent rather than as harsh and wretched as Hobbes had portrayed. Locke, in contrast to Thomas Hobbes, thought that reason and tolerance are qualities of human nature. Locke shared Hobbes' belief that humankind can be selfish because of their nature. Everyone had the inherent right to protect their "Life, health, Liberty, or Possessions" in a state in which they were all equal and autonomous. He claimed that everything in the natural world was perfect, save for the unstable condition of the land.

- State of nature in which all are equal and autonomous

According to Locke, the State of Nature, also known as the natural state of man, is a state in which one is completely free to conduct their life in the manner that they deem appropriate, without any interference from other people. Nevertheless, this does not imply that it is a condition of freedom; individuals are not free to act in any way that they choose or even to do what they believe to be in their own best interest. It is not a morally repugnant place to dwell, even though there is no government or civil force in the State of Nature to punish those who breach the law. The existence of the State of Nature comes before politics, but morality does not come before it. Within this stage, individuals are on an equal footing, which implies that they are both believed to be capable of discovering and being bound by the Law of Nature.

- Morality preceded politics

As far as Locke is concerned, the Law of Nature is the origin of all morals and was bestowed upon humankind by God. Locke states that we should not cause harm to the "life, health, liberty, or possessions" of other individuals. Because every one of us is a part of God, and we are unable to take away what is truly His, it is against the rules for us to damage each other. In other words, the State of Nature is a condition of liberty in which individuals are free to pursue their own objectives and plans without interference from any other individual. Additionally, it is a very tranquil location due to the Law of Nature.

- The State of nature was a Tranquil location.

Despite what Hobbes claims, the State of Nature is not the same as the State of War. This is the reason stated above. On the other hand, it has the potential to escalate into a state of war, particularly when people struggle over land. The people who live in the State of Nature are free because they adhere to the Law of Nature and do not do bodily harm to one another. On the other hand, war begins between two or more men when one of them declares war on another by attempting to take something from the other or by trying to enslave him.

In the State of Nature, it is against the law for men to employ force against other people, and the Law of Nature allows them to protect their own lives because it is against that law. For this reason, one can kill anyone else who tries to use force against them. As a result of the absence of any human administration in the State of Nature, the battle will likely continue after it has begun. There are many reasons why people should quit the State of Nature and work together to establish a human government, and this is one of the most important reasons.

2.2.2 Property and Political Society

In Locke's defence of civil government and the agreement that creates it, property is crucial. Locke believed that when a person combined his work with natural resources, private property was developed. Therefore, one has a claim to both the land and the food produced there, for instance, if they till a piece of land in the wild and turn it into a farm where food is produced. For example, in Locke's opinion, for the native Americans were not making use of the essential resources of nature in their land, America did not truly belong to them.

Put another way, since they did not farm it, they had no rightful title to it, and others may rightfully take it. The Law of Nature places restrictions on the amount of property that can be owned since it forbids taking more from the natural world than can be used, leaving others without enough for themselves. God gave nature to all people for their shared subsistence; thus, no one is allowed to take more than their fair share. Because men want security for their property—including their own bodies—when they choose to leave the State of Nature. Property is the central theme of Locke's defence of the Social Contract and civil government.

Locke, unlike Hobbes, does not regard the State of Nature

- The state of nature has the potential to escalate into a state of war.

- Towards a human government

- The combination of Work with natural resources leads to the creation of private property.

- The creation of Private property is central to the formation of civil government.

as an individual condition. Rather, it is filled by mothers and dads with their children, or families, in what he refers to as "conjugal society". These civilisations are based on voluntary agreements to care for children collectively, and they are moral rather than political. Political society emerges when individuals representing their families gather in the State of Nature and agree to relinquish executive power to punish those who violate the Law of Nature in favour of a government's public power. After this, they are subject to the majority's will.

When people come to an agreement to renounce the State of Nature and instead form a society, they establish "one body politic under one government" and submit themselves to the will of that government. To put it another way, they submit themselves to the will of the government. Regardless of whether the organisation is still in its early stages or has already been created, the only way to become a member of such a body is to provide one's unequivocal agreement. This is the only acceptable way to join the organisation.

When mankind is granted permission to build a political society and government, they are awarded three things that they did not have in the State of Nature: laws, courts to arbitrate laws, and executive power to put these laws into practice. These are all things that they did not have in the State of Nature. Consequently, as a result of this, every man gave the government, that he established through the contract, the authority to protect himself and punish those who disobeyed the Law of Nature.

Given that the goal of "men's uniting into commonwealth" is to preserve their wealth, as well as their lives, liberty, and well-being in general, Locke can easily imagine the conditions under which the compact with government is broken. Men are justified in resisting the authority of a civil government, such as a king. When a government's executive power devolves into tyranny, such as by dissolving the legislature and thus denying the people the ability to make laws for their own preservation, the resulting tyrant enters a State of Nature, specifically a state of war with the people, and they have the same right to self-defence as they did before entering a compact to establish a society in the first place.

In other words, the justification for the authority of the executive branch of government is the protection of the people's property and well-being. When such protection is no longer available or when the king becomes a tyrant and acts against the people's interests, they have a right, if not an obligation, to

oppose his authority. The social compact can be broken down, and the process of establishing a political society can begin again.

Because Locke did not see the State of Nature as harshly as Hobbes did, he may foresee circumstances in which it would be preferable to reject a certain civil government and return to the State of Nature to build a better civil government in its place. The contrasts between Hobbes' and Locke's ideas of the social compact are thus explained by both their perspectives on human nature and the nature of morality.

2.2.3 Criticisms

One objection to Locke's social contract theory is that it provides a restricted scope for the government's authority and the implementation of laws. Others believe that Locke's emphasis on the protection of individual rights and the limitation of the government's power has led him to overlook the significant role that law enforcement plays in maintaining societal order.In addition, critics draw attention to the ethical problems brought about by Locke's theory. Because individuals may not always consent to be subject to the authority of the state, the concept of consent, which serves as the foundation of the social contract, can create issues when it is applied to law enforcement. This gives rise to problems regarding how to deal with persons who refuse to acknowledge or comply with laws, which poses a potential threat to society.

Critics contend that Locke's theory does not sufficiently handle power imbalances within society, and there is also the possibility of misuse committed by law enforcement officials. In the absence of adequate checks and balances, law enforcement authorities have the potential to misuse their authority, thereby violating the rights of citizens and compromising the values of justice and equality. Although it is undeniable that John Locke's concepts on social contract theory have had a significant impact on the fundamentals of contemporary governance, it is important not to ignore the objections that have been levelled against their application to law enforcement. When analysing the function of law enforcement in a democratic society, it is important to take into mind the constraints placed on the authority of the government, as well as the potential ethical problems that are associated with consent dynamics and power imbalances.

Summarized Overview

Locke believed that life in the natural state was pleasant and decent, unlike Hobbes' harsh portrayal. He believed that reason and tolerance were qualities of human nature and that everyone had the inherent right to protect their "Life, health, Liberty, or Possessions" in a state where they were all equal and autonomous. The State of Nature, according to Locke, is a state where individuals are completely free to conduct their lives without interference from others. However, this does not mean that individuals are not free to act in any way they choose or even do what they believe to be in their best interest. The existence of the State of Nature comes before politics, but morality does not come before it. Morality preceded politics in Locke's view, as the Law of Nature is the origin of all morals and was bestowed upon humankind by God. In the State of Nature, individuals are on an equal footing, and they are both believed to be capable of discovering and being bound by the Law of Nature. In Locke's defence of civil government, property is crucial. He believed that when a person combined his work with natural resources, private property was created, allowing individuals to claim both the land and the food produced there. Locke's view of the State of Nature as a conjugal society differs from Hobbes' view, as mothers and fathers fill it with their children or families in voluntary agreements. When people form a political society, they submit themselves to the will of the government, and consent is required for membership.

John Locke's social contract theory suggests that when mankind is granted permission to build a political society and government, they are given three things they did not have in the State of Nature: laws, courts to arbitrate laws, and executive power to put these laws into practice. This gives the government the authority to protect itself and punish those who disobey the Law of Nature. Locke's theory suggests that when a government's executive power devolves into tyranny, the people have the same right to self-defence as before. John Locke possessed a strong belief in the authority of the people, in contrast to Hobbes. Locke granted the state the authority to function as the ultimate governing power until it gained the approval of the populace. Individuals possess the inherent entitlement to interrogate and deconstruct the government if it acts in opposition to the interests of the populace. The social compact can be broken down to create a new political society, as Locke did not see the State of Nature as harshly as Hobbes did. This freedom of individuals to break away from one civil society to another is predicated on the respective differences in the theories of human nature and the nature of morality available in Locke. Critics argue that Locke's theory provides a restricted scope for the authority of the government and the implementation of laws, overlooking the significant role of law enforcement in upholding societal order. Additionally, critics argue that Locke's theory does not sufficiently handle power imbalances within society and the possibility of misuse committed by law enforcement officials.

Self-Assessment

1. What is the key difference between the nature of the societies and the state of nature in Hobbes and Locke?
2. Why do critics think that Locke's social contract theory provides a restricted scope for the authority of the government and the implementation of laws?

Assignments

1. Morality Precedes Politics, according to Locke. Elaborately discuss this statement.
2. Illustratively explain the process of the creation of private property after John Locke.
3. What is Locke's response to the Divine Rights theory?

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UNIT 3
Social Contract Theory of Rousseau

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- have an overview of Rousseau's Social Contract theory

- get a grasp on the key concepts in Rousseau's theoretical framework

- identify the characteristic features of Rousseau's Social Contract Theory

- set a ground for the comparison between the other competing theories in the
  social contract tradition

Background

Rousseau was a well-known philosopher who influenced the French Revolution. His small book, *Social Contract,* also became famous for its often-quoted statements about freedom. According to Rousseau, modern states oppress the physical freedom that is our inheritance. He makes this claim by using the famous statement, "Man is born free, but he is everywhere in chains." Within the context of The Social Contract tradition, Rousseau's primary objective is to investigate the ways in which freedom can be achieved within a civil society. Human beings are inherently free beings, transcending the mere political desire to avoid tyrannical rule and encompassing the profound metaphysical intention to live in accordance with our individual wills.

Keywords

General will, Consent, Natural Freedom, Civil Liberty, Social Order

2.3.1 Social Contract

- The Assertion of Inherent human freedom

In contrast to other naturally occurring organisms, human beings do not experience complete reliance on instinct, appetite, or any other automatic biological force. Conversely, we determine our own objectives and means by which we will achieve them. Rousseau posits that our species is unique among all other animals not by virtue of its possession of free will rather, by virtue of its rationality and compassion, both of which are to some extent possessed by animals.

However, notwithstanding this inherent potential for profound liberty, we currently reside in societies that impose restrictions on the exercise of liberty. Society enforces prohibitions on activities that are contrary to our will, including trespassing, driving excessively fast, and smoking in restaurants. Additionally, it imposes obligations on us that we would not otherwise choose to perform, including registering for the draft, paying taxes, and serving on juries. Individuals who refuse to comply are subject to punishment or coercion, so humans nevertheless comply out of obligation.

- Life is restrictive and prohibitive societies

- The voluntary adoption of obligations

Despite the inconvenience that such restrictions may cause, most of the time, we do not consider them as limitations on human liberty. Just as tyranny is an abomination, so too is lawlessness. Nevertheless, certain laws are discriminatory. Therefore, what distinguishes the just from the unjust? The solution, according to Rousseau, is consent. I am morally obligated to respect only those duties, obligations, and authorities that I have voluntarily adopted for myself; these are the only legitimate constraints on my choices. Legitimacy is absent from constraints, duties, and authority in the absence of consent.

- Within the institution of family, authority and obligation are organic.

Rousseau might consider one possible exception to this rule to be the family unit, where the authority of parents and the obligation of children to heed them are organic, resulting from the complete reliance of the latter on the former rather than from consensual agreement. However, even these inherent responsibilities have a termination point: when the infants attain adulthood and assume autonomy over their life. After this pivotal juncture, consent emerges as an indispensable prerequisite for legitimate authority.

2.3.2 The idea of Assent

Rousseau diverges significantly from his contemporary predecessors, Hobbes and Locke. To begin with, Rousseau rejects the notion of the "right of the strongest" in opposition to Hobbes. A right is a claim deserving of regard in the absence of coercion. However, should you force me to submit to your authority rather than gain my consent, my obligation to obey your command is limited to the extent that your power surpasses mine. If at any time I perceive that I can overcome you or flee, I am free to do so. Your command is in no way a legitimate right, as it is wholly dependent on your own strength.

Furthermore, Rousseau refutes the notion that individuals can ever justifiably relinquish their rights and submit to the capricious volition of another, in contrast to Locke. Locke posits that individuals may forfeit their rights, including fundamental ones like the right to life, by knowingly instigating an unjust conflict and enduring defeat. Rousseau, on the other hand, contends that our humanity is inextricably linked to our freedom and thus cannot be exchanged. The concept itself is inherently contradictory. Therefore, even war losers maintain their privileges.

Therefore, assent is an essential prerequisite for legitimate authority over human beings, according to Rousseau. It should be noted, nevertheless, that our initial problem has not been entirely resolved; rather, it has merely been expounded upon. Humans are inherently autonomous beings whose consent is required for the exercise of legitimate authority without exception; however, coercive governments impose constraints and obligations on us everywhere. In what way can these two facts—empirical and moral—become theoretically reconciled without either truth being denied or leading to the illogical conclusion that all of our burdens are unjust?

2.3.3 The Fundamental Political Dilemma

This, according to Rousseau, is the fundamental dilemma that the political philosopher is confronted with. According to him, the objective of the political philosopher is to "identify a structure of association that safeguards the person and property of every member with the combined power of all, and wherein each individual retains their previous level of freedom while uniting with the others."

- Hobbes' theory of Coercion is rejected.

- Locke's suggestion of the absolute submission of freedom is rejected.

- The significance of consent for the legitimate authority of the state over human beings.

- Rousseau's discovery of the fundamental problem of political philosophy

A ready answer to this fundamental query is available to Rousseau. He contends that a society can exercise legitimate and absolute authority over its citizens when two conditions are met. Initially, the establishment of the society needed to be predicated on unanimous assent, wherein every founding member granted an equal degree of approval to the stipulations. Consent is required in this instance because, as stated previously, it is the only thing that can legitimise authority, and it must be unanimous because no one can speak for another individual when granting consent. Furthermore, the pact in question must acknowledge the collective desire to have absolute sovereignty over the society and its laws; not any pact will suffice. The initial condition establishes Rousseau's lineage with an extensive lineage of social contract theorists, including Hobbes (and Rawls), which regards the notion of a social contract as the pinnacle of political legitimacy. In contrast, the second condition represents an original contribution that sets Rousseau apart from other philosophers.

2.3.4 The General Will

The general will represents the collective will of the people. Upon the ratification of the social contract, the desires of numerous individuals are consolidated into a single entity, giving rise to a novel collective formation known as a republic, in the literal sense of the term from Latin. This process resembles a chemical reaction. Its totality exceeds the sum of its individual components. It has a volition similar to that of an organism, and comparable to other organisms, it acts in its own self-interest. The concept of the general will, also known as the will of the republic, is conceptually separate from both the private wills of individual citizens, which prioritise the particular interests of those citizens, and the 'will of all', which is merely a jumbled collection of those private wills. The general will be directed toward the collective interest rather than any particular private interest.

To illustrate, one could consider the context of a football team. Every individual who participates in the team possesses a personal testament. Every individual might aspire to be a starter, the team commander, or the preferred passing target of the quarterback. However, the team as a cohesive entity also possesses a collective, overarching volition that is shared by each participant in their capacity as a teammate. Given that no individual can win the game on his/her own, the decisions regarding starting personnel, team captains, and quarterback

- Unanimous Individual assent and collective desire

- General Will is the will of the republic.

- Collective volition over the individual one

targets pertain to collective volition rather than individual volition.

Why must the general will, the sole authority that determines which laws are enacted, function as the sovereign in a republic? This is because, according to Rousseau, legitimate authority can only be granted through consent. Nevertheless, the validity of consensual agreements varies. For example, consent to the arbitrary rule of another individual is impossible. The very concept entails relinquishing the inherent capacity of an individual to exert volition and is, therefore, inappropriate. Rousseau's perspective stands in opposition to that of Hobbes and Locke, who contend that consent alone is adequate to legitimise virtually any political arrangement, provided that certain limitations are observed. In the state of nature, individuals are sovereign over themselves. However, upon entering society, they either submit their sovereignty to the authority of a single ruler (as in Hobbes) or the will of the majority (as in Locke).

2.3.5 Liberty and Sovereignty

Rousseau, on the other hand, disputes the legitimacy of such a transfer of sovereignty. Your own volition is the only force capable of governing you. It is not within the authority of a democratic majority or a single sovereign to legislate against legislation that you disagree with. Therefore, the concept of the general will is brilliant in that it permits coercive law enforcement without infringing on the liberty of any citizen. In a sovereign state of the general will, compliance with any law that is imposed upon you is tantamount to imposing a law upon yourself to the degree that you, like every other citizen, possess a portion of the general will. Consequently, despite being coerced, one "remains as free as before."

But why must the sovereignty of the general will be absolute if it is to be sovereign? Rousseau provides several explanations. The two most intriguing ones are the following. To begin with, in order to impose a legal constraint on its power, the general will would have to enter into a contract with itself. However, contracts invariably encompass multiple parties. With a singular, unitary will, no private or collective singular entity can be obligated to an agreement with itself. The notion itself is beyond comprehension. Therefore, due to its exclusive ownership by the republic, the general will is incapable of being bound by any contract with itself.

- Individual volition is the primary.

- The assurance of freedom

- The Republic owns the general will.

Furthermore, the absolute submission of the private will of every citizen to the collective will is critical for the republic's continued existence. Once more, consider the football team. A player cannot be regarded as a true colleague if he/she prioritise his/her own interests over the collective interests of the group since the definition of a teammate is a dedication to the collective welfare of the group. Moreover, in the event that each individual on the team prioritises his/her personal desires over the collective will of the team, the group would cease to exist and consist solely of a collection of estranged participants. The general will is the collective will; on the other hand, it is the will of the whole, which has no time limit.

Similarly, within the framework of a republic, an individual who places personal preference over others' 'will' does not qualify as a true citizen; conversely, if every citizen places personal preference over others' wills, there would be no republic at all, but a mere collection of disunited individuals. Rousseau believes that in order to establish a republic, every citizen must relinquish any assertions of personal freedom and position "all his powers under the supreme direction of the general will." Again, this may appear radical, but since every citizen participates in the collective volition, every law is a directive bestowed upon them by others. No assertions of autonomy are required.

2.3.6 Enlarged Individual Agency

It might continue to feel apprehensive at the prospect of relinquishing its entire set of rights to an absolute sovereign. Why would an individual voluntarily commit to such a society? This inquiry might be more effectively posed in an alternative manner. According to Rousseau, what benefits do individuals obtain by transitioning from the state of nature to society? They trade their natural liberty for a form of liberty that offers greater advantages. In a hypothetical pre-political state of nature devoid of governmental regulation of conduct, individuals possess no rights to that which they are unable to acquire and retain through their own agency. In light of the inherent constraints on individual endeavour, the resultant scarcity of material possessions renders those that do exist precarious and perpetually susceptible to theft by rivals who are more formidable, cunning, intelligent, or lucky.

Obviously, Rousseau, in contrast to Hobbes, does not consider the lives of pre-political individuals to be wretched. However, he believes that life is more favourable then. In

- The formation of society requires the sacrifice of personal desires.

- There is a need for the prioritisation of the general will for true citizenship.

- The transfer of individual liberty for more liberty

- Civil society is a better place for individual citizens.

contrast to the state of nature, where only material possessions exist, property is established and safeguarded within civil society through the endorsement and protection of the political body. Therefore, upon integrating into society, every individual reclaims the amount of value that they have lost and, as a result, gains additional agency to safeguard their possessions.

- Different receptions of Rousseou's theory

Although Rousseau's political theory has captivated and motivated a great number of readers throughout history, it has also been subject to severe censure. Scholars, including Isaiah Berlin, Bertrand Russell, and Karl Popper, have characterised Rousseau as a proponent of totalitarianism due to his insistence on the absolute sovereignty of the general will. However, numerous scholars, including Philip Pettit, consider Rousseau to be an advocate for egalitarian and classical republican values and principles; thus, the evaluation of Rousseau remains an open subject. Inquisitive pupils will be motivated to peruse Rousseau's political writings in order to assess their own worth.

Summarized Overview

Rousseau argues that modern states oppress the physical freedom inherent in humans, arguing that human beings are inherently free and have the ability to live according to their individual wills. He believes that our species is unique due to its rationality and compassion, which are, to some extent, possessed by animals. However, we currently live in societies that impose restrictions on the exercise of this liberty, such as prohibitions on activities contrary to our will and obligations that we would not otherwise choose to perform. Rousseau suggests that the solution to this problem is consent, as humans are morally obligated to respect only those duties, obligations, and authorities they have voluntarily adopted for themselves. This principle differs significantly from his contemporary predecessors, Hobbes and Locke, who reject the notion of a "right of the strongest" and argue that individuals cannot justifiably relinquish their rights. Rousseau's objective is to identify a structure of association that safeguards the person and property of every member with the combined power of all while allowing each individual to retain their previous level of freedom while uniting with others. He contends that a society can exercise legitimate and absolute authority over its citizens under two conditions: unanimous assent, where every founding member grants an equal degree of approval to the stipulations, and a pact acknowledging the collective desire for absolute sovereignty over the society and its laws. This initial condition aligns with an extensive lineage of social contract theorists, including Hobbes and Rawls, who regard the notion of a social contract as the pinnacle of political legitimacy. The general will, or the will of the republic, represents the collective will of the people and is the sole authority that determines which laws are enacted

in a republic. It functions as the sovereign in a republic because it cannot be granted through consent, as it involves relinquishing the inherent capacity of an individual to exert volition. Rousseau's perspective stands in opposition to Hobbes and Locke, who argue that consent alone is adequate to legitimise virtually any political arrangement, provided certain limitations are observed. Rousseau believes that the sovereignty of the general will must be absolute to be sovereign. This is because it requires a contract with itself, which is impossible with a singular, unitary will.

Furthermore, the absolute submission of the private will of every citizen to the collective will is critical for the republic's continued existence. In a republic, an individual who places personal preference over others' will does not qualify as a true citizen, and every law is a directive bestowed upon them by others. Rousseau believes that individuals voluntarily commit to such a society because they trade their natural liberty for a form of liberty that offers greater advantages. In a hypothetical pre-political state of nature devoid of governmental regulation of conduct, individuals possess no rights to that which they are unable to acquire and retain through their own agency. In contrast, Rousseau believes that life is more favourable in a republic, as property is established and safeguarded within civil society through the endorsement and protection of the political body. Despite its popularity, Rousseau's political theory has been subject to severe censure from scholars like Isaiah Berlin, Bertrand Russell, and Karl Popper. However, many scholars, including Philip Pettit, consider Rousseau an advocate for egalitarian and classical republican values and principles.

Self-Assessment

1. Why do some critics think that Rousseau is an advocate of a totalitarian state?
2. Why do some other critics argue that Rousseau's framework supports egalitarianism?
3. What makes human beings unique in comparison to other animals, according to Rousseau?

Assignments

1. Critically compare the social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau.
2. Write a brief and concise essay on the notion of general will by following Rousseau.
3. 'Man is born free, but he is everywhere in chains.' Critically reflect on this Rousseauean statement.

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4. Mill, J. S. (1859). *On liberty*.

Suggested Reading

1. Bertram, C. (2004). *Rousseau and The Social Contract*. Routledge.

2. Douglass, R. (2015). *Rousseau and Hobbes: Nature, free will and the passions*. Oxford University Press.

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4. Mill, J. S. (1859). *On liberty*.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.
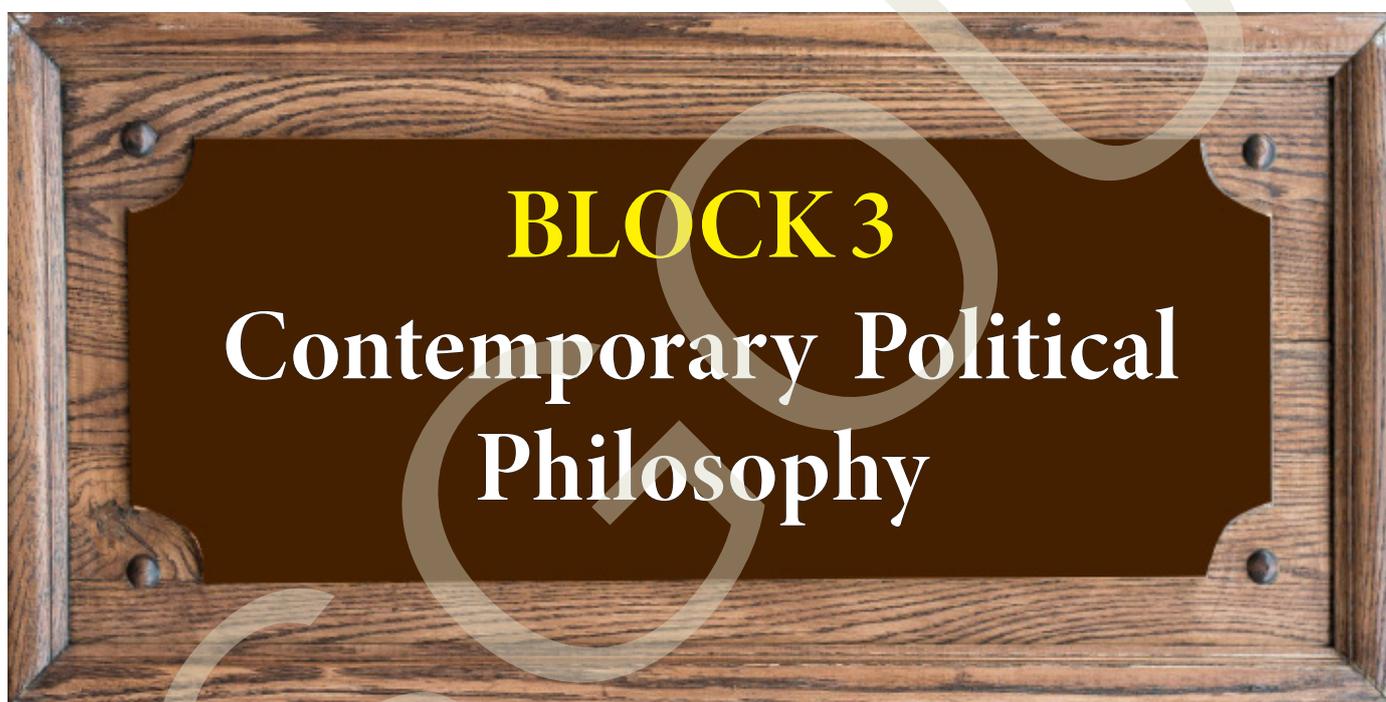
BLOCK 3
Contemporary Political Philosophy

UNIT 1
Karl Marx: Theory of Class Struggle and Revolution

Learning Outcomes

By the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand key concepts in Marxism and explain the fundamental principles of Marx's historical materialism and historical determinism.

- describe the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure, alienation, modes of production

- understand different historical modes of production as outlined by Marx.

- analyse the criticisms against Marxism from various perspectives and assess its relevance and applicability in contemporary society.

Background

Following his predecessor Hegel, Marx also (1818-1883) believed that the development of history follows a logical structure of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. This pattern of development is called dialectic, and this is the first part of dialectical idealism and dialectical materialism in Hegel and Marx, respectively. Dialectical idealism and dialectical materialism are two philosophies of history. Hegel propounded dialectical idealism and found the structure in the underlying ideas of human society, like that of freedom and stated that the development of history is the development of human consciousness and ideas. However, Marx rejected the notion that it is the ideas which push history ahead. According to him, even though Hegel grasped the dialectical structure rightly, he was mistaken about where exactly to find the structure.

According to Marx, Hegel's philosophy of history is too abstract and far from the actual daily lives of human beings. Before anything, human beings are concerned about material needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, and so on. Humans are worried about how they should ensure that their needs are met. They are concerned about who produces the food items, who has access to them, and how those items are produced and distributed.

They are concerned about how properties are owned, stored, and accumulated, as well as who owns what and who owns not. Marx's emphatic point is that the real dialectical structure lies in the level of production of materials. With this basic assumption, Marx started his political philosophy. Marx used the dialectic framework to understand and interpret reality. He introduced concepts of Base and Superstructure as a metaphor for the way society is architected. The society is architected, according to him, with the economic base at the bottom and the cultural superstructure at the top. Base included modes, means, and relationships of production, and the superstructure included social, political, cultural, religious and legal dimensions. The Superstructure 'arises' upon the Base. In another sense, Marx viewed individual consciousness as a superstructure that is determined by historical and social processes at the base or bottom. In his initial and formative years, the idea of evolution, which explained the course of human history, got attention and was in the air. While Hegel (1770–1831), in his *Phenomenology of Spirit,* put forth one version of evolution (evolution of the consciousness/mind in history), Darwin (1809–1882), in his *Origin of Species,* propounded the theory of biological evolution by natural selection, that species change over time, give rise to new species, and share a common ancestor. While Marx accepted some of the contributions of his contemporaries, he rejected some others and propounded his alternative theory of historical evolution – the theory of historical materialism. Marx borrowed the core of his theories from Hegel and then revised them to fit his convictions.

Keywords

Political life, State, Ethics, Political ideology, Political schools

Discussion

• Marx's relation to Hegel and association with Engels

Marx was a historian, journalist and sociologist and undoubtedly one of the most influential socialists of the 19th century. He was born as the son of a Jewish lawyer and was educated at the Universities of Bonn and Berlin. In the latter, he became closely associated with the young Hegelians. Later, he adapted Hegel's dialectic to a materialistic theory of human history and society. Marx left the University of Bonn after the University authorities viewed his political affiliations and views with disfavour. He moved to Paris, where he met Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), who became his close associate and collaborator in the future.

The first meeting between Marx and Engels happened in 1844. Engels, the son of a rich cotton spinner who owned a factory, observed and analysed the English industrial system at

- Functioning of factories at the time of industrial revolution

- Marxism as a school of theories about history, society, economy and politics

- Concentrated study of history is essential to understand human society and evolution

a time when the country was going through a gigantic industrial revolution. Engels's observations and findings were very similar to those of Marx, leading both to collaborate closely. Marx had to leave Paris as well after his writings and views were disfavoured by the authorities in Paris, and he moved to Brussels along with Engels. There, both actively participated in the socialist movements of the working class and collaborated in the writing of the Manifesto of the Communist Party, which was published early in 1848.

Marx has written extensively on society, economics and politics. His famous works are – *The Class Struggle in France* (1850), *The Communist Manifesto* (in collaboration with Engles) (1848), *Das Capital (*published in three volumes in 1867, 1885, 1894*), The Critique of Political Economy* (1859), *The Holy Family (1865), The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847), *etc. The Communist Manifesto* is considered the 'Bible of Communism' and is accepted as the Socialist document for teaching the Marxian theory. Marx emerged as an intellectual who developed influential political dogmas. Marx's school of thought was later branded as 'Marxian tradition' or 'Marxism' comprising of theories about history, society, economy and politics, which collectively hold that human history or society develops through what he calls 'class struggle.'

3.1.1 Historical Materialism: An Overview

Historical materialism, also known as dialectical materialism, is the philosophical foundation of Marxist theory and serves as the methodological framework for analysing societal and historical development and change. Marx used the historical materialism to study the society and history and their dynamics. Marx was initially attracted to and is forever indebted to his German predecessor, Hegel, and his dialectical idealism, which Marx revised and put forth an alternative theory of history. Both Hegel and Marx viewed a concentrated study of history as essential to understanding human society and its evolution.

The questions that historical materialism puts forth include: what is the nature of history, and what drives the historical change? How does society develop over time, and what are the different phases and stages of society, such as slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and socialism/communism? What is at the base and superstructure of a society? Why do societies change, and what is the role of contradictions inherent in the

change in society? What is the role of human beings in history? Are they primarily individual units or collective units? How do they exist as an ensemble of social relations, not as a detached individual? Are they passive subjects of historical forces or active ones who shape society and history through collective labour and efforts? How does ideology influence society? How do class struggles shape society and drive social change?

Marx attributed an absolute version of historical idealism to his predecessor, Hegel, who, according to the former, emphasised that ideas and consciousness are the primary drivers of historical events. According to Hegel, Marx interprets it as the human consciousness that develops and evolves across history through dialectic contradictions that shape social, historical, and political structures. The basic difference is that while Marx's theory of history is harnessed on the debate of matter and material productions, Hegel's theory of history is harnessed on the debate of mind and consciousness. Marx's interpretation of Hegel's philosophy as absolute idealism – absolutely about mind, consciousness and ideas – has been severely criticised by the emerging Hegel scholarship.

Both Hegel and Marx appeal to certain processes and purposes of history but differ on whether matter or mind is the motive power of history. Simone Weil (1909–1943) indicates the influence of Hegel on Marx's thought: "We must remember the Hegelian origins of Marxist thought. Hegel believed in a hidden mind at work in the universe and that the history of the world is simply the history of this world's mind, which, as in the case of everything spiritual, tends indefinitely towards perfection. Marx claimed to 'put back on its feet' the Hegelian dialectic, which he accused of being 'upside down', by substituting matter for mind as the motive power of history. Still, by an extraordinary paradox, he conceived history, starting from this rectification, as though he attributed to matter what is the very essence of mind—an unceasing aspiration towards the best." Murray states the difference between Hegel and Marx: "Thus the fundamental difference between the theories of Hegel and Marx is that on Hegel's theory, reality is a logical system while on Marx's theory, it is a causal system, i.e. a system which develops in accordance with laws of a purely empirical character. To Hegel, dialectical logic is the key to truth, while to Marx, the scientific method is the only one by which knowledge of the real world can be established."

Marx agreed with Hegel that reality is not static or fixed but a dialectical process. However, he differed in holding that this dialectical process is that of a material character, not that of a logical one. Marx affirmed that the dialectical process is a process of material reality in which thought reflects, not of thought itself. Hegel, according to Marx, was an idealist because, according to him, the former believed that thought is the fundamental reality and that there is no 'external' reality to which thought corresponds. Marx upheld materialism and rejected Hegel's doctrine of the primacy of thought over materiality, believing that the nature of thought is determined by the material reality of which it is the reflection.

Dialectics is the Marxian method of studying society/history and its dynamics, and Marxism considers this method or approach as scientific in analysing society/history. The dialectics primarily upholds the following theses. One, the innermost nature of things is dynamic and conflictual rather than static and inert. This view finds within things, not a static foundation but rather their own contradictory attitudes or parts of which things are made up. Two, the world is not made up of complex things but of processes. Thus, matter is inseparable from motion and the motion of matter contains an infinite diversity of forms which arise one from another and pass into another. Three, things never exist as separate individual units but in inherent and essential relation and interconnections. Bertell Ollman states that the dialectical investigation "is taking the longer view, not only forward to what something can develop into but also backwards to how it has developed up to now. This longer view, however, must be preceded by taking a broader view, since nothing and no one changes on its or his own but only in close relationship with other people and things, that is, as part of an interactive system."

The basic tenet of materialism is that the world, by its very nature, is material; everything that exists comes into being based on material causes, arises and develops in accordance with the laws of motion of matter. According to materialism, matter is an objective reality existing 'outside' and 'independent' of the mind. The thoughts, ideas and concepts (consciousness) and politics, law, religion, and morality, which people believe and practise, flow from the material activities and economic relations of humankind. It also affirms that it is the economic conditions and forces, not the ideas of truth, justice, morality or law, that mould the social and political institutions. That is,

it is not the Hegelian 'ideas' that Marx claims, but rather the material conditions of life that bring about evolutionary changes in the ethical, social, religious, economic, and political ideas, institutions, and systems. Put it in Marx's own words, it is "not the consciousness which determines the material conditions of life, but the material conditions of life that determines the consciousness."

Marx's idea of relation plays a crucial role in his overall philosophy. First and foremost, Marx states that "… the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality, it is the ensemble of social relations." Marx's idea is that human nature is not static but rather varies historically and socially and that a change in social relations ('ensemble of social relations') can change the human essence. To put it in a different word, human potential is intertwined with social relations and institutional contexts. The idea of relation in Marx complements various subthemes such as production, evolution and revolution. Some of them are the following:

- Human being is an ensemble of social relations

i. Men enter into certain relations by the forces of economic circumstances, such as the relations of production. This implies that historical processes, movements or evolution are determined by production.

ii. These forces and economic relations of production constitute the understructure or infrastructure of society. Upon them, the superstructure of legal, moral, religious, and political institutions and various ways of thinking are based.

iii. Contradictions between the forces and relations of production function as the mechanism of historical movement

- Ideas of relations and its significance in Marx'sphilosophy

iv. The contradictions lead to class struggle, which plays a significant role in the historical evolution

v. The dialectics of the forces of relations of production suggest a theory of revolution

vi. Stages or phases of human history can be divided based on their modes of production like Primitive, Slavery, Feudalist and Capitalist systems.

3.1.2 Base and Superstructure

Marx's dialectical approach is a materialistic conception of the development of nature, society and history. He cap-

tured the inner contradictions and conflicting tendencies in the operation of all processes of nature, society, and history. In his method for the study of society and its dynamics, Marx conceptualised base and superstructure at the core of the dialectic. He posited that the material conditions of society, specifically the economic conditions, make the base and shape, the superstructure that is, the social, political, and ideological structures. This approach stems from Marx's belief that human beings are primarily engaged in producing and reproducing the necessities of life, and thus, economic relations form the foundation of societal development. It is here Marx claims that he put back the Hegelian dialectic on its feet, which he accused of being 'upside down' by giving priority to mind/thought over the material conditions.

Marx stresses the modes or means of production, forces of production (productive forces), relations of production and conditions of production to show how they are inextricably linked to each other. They constitute the economic base of society and determine the superstructure of religion, culture, law, morality and politics. The modes of production are the ways in which societies organise the production of goods and services. They have two main components: the forces of production and the relations of production. The forces of production are the physical means and techniques of production like labour power (human capacity to work and produce goods and services), tools, machinery, raw materials, buildings, technologies or other natural sources that are used in production and transformed through labour into goods. The relations of production are the social relationships and structures that organise production, including property relations, class relations, and the organisation of labour.

Marx argued that the historical process proceeds through a series of modes of production, characterised by explicit or implicit class struggle and driving humankind towards communism. The major modes of production are Primitive Communism, Slavery, Feudalism, Capitalism and Communism, all of them having different forces and relations of production. In Primitive Communism, as it existed in the early hunter-gatherer societies, forces of production were simple tools and collective labour. In contrast, the relation of production was shared resources and communal living without any private property. In Slavery, forces of production are basic agricultural tools and labour provided by enslaved people, while the relations of production are that of masters owning slaves

and land and enslaved people providing labour as it existed in Ancient Rome and Greece. In the Feudalism of Medieval Europe, people used agricultural tools and land as forces of production, and the relations of production were that of lords owning the land and peasants (serfs) working in the land and providing labour and services in exchange for protection and a place to live.

In the modern Capitalist industrial society, which came under the minute study of Marx and Engels, advanced machinery and industrial technology. And, factories were used as forces of production, while the relations of production were that of capitalists (bourgeoisie) owning the means of production and workers (proletariat) selling their labour for wages. Marx critiqued the capitalist mode of production, which is driven by a heartless pursuit of profit and accumulation and by extraction of surplus value from the proletariat. He believed that Capitalism would produce its own contradictions, resulting in its collapse and the emergence of a new system and mode of production in the Socialist/Communist state. In the Socialist/Communist state, forces of production will be advanced technology and machinery owned by the state and the relations of production would be that of a classless society, collective ownership and production for use rather than profit. The 'conditions of production' include the form of state law and the groupings of social classes which are the most important material conditions of life in each society. This is how Marx views historical materialism, the relation between political and economic life, and examines how the changes in the economic base led to transformations in the superstructure, driving historical progress through a series of stages such as slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and eventually, communism. These are different historical forms of capital. Terry Eagleton states: "It is to Marxism itself that we owe the concept of different historical forms of capital: mercantile, agrarian, industrial, monopoly, financial, imperial and so on."

- Modes and means of production constitute the economic base

Marx intends to establish that the economy determines not only the social mode of production but also the social relation of production; the particular social relation of production in a particular economic system divides the social members into different classes. The modern capitalist economy divides the social members into two categories – bourgeoise and proletariat or capitalists and working class. Marxism upholds that it is the particular economic system that determines how social

- Economy determines both the social mode and social relations of production

property is distributed among the population and who will accumulate how much property or wealth. A transformation in the economic mode of production altogether changes the social system and social structure and brings about social changes that get a new shape and form.

The dialectic, in Hegel and Marx, is conceptualised in crucial connection with qualitative changes in history and society. It surpasses the contradictions that are embedded in history and culture, drives them simultaneously, and moves towards a synthesis that presents a qualitatively better condition. At the core of the dialectic are the contradictions and their resolution through synthesis, leading to qualitative changes. In that sense, dialectics considers all social transition and development as an onward and upward movement. It indicates a transition from an old qualitative state to a new qualitative state, a development from the inferior to the better, from the lower to the higher, from the simple to the complex and this development occurs as an exposition of the contradictions inherent in things, society and history. There is an inevitable struggle of the opposing forces or tendencies which operate on the basis of these contradictions.

3.1.3 Theories of Alienation and Class War

Alienation literally meant 'estrangement.' Marx uses the theory of alienation in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1843) to indicate a material and social process. As in the case of his foundational theory of historical materialism, Marx is indebted to Hegel for his theory of alienation. While Hegel uses alienation in a more general sense, Marx specifies and uses it in an economic sense.

For Hegel, alienation is the state of consciousness as it confronts the external nature in which objects appear to men as alien or external. Hegel upholds that man is a self-alienated spirit, and consciousness emancipates itself from this alienation by recognising that objects that appear to exist outside the consciousness are only phenomenal expressions of the consciousness. There, the consciousness realises that consciousness and the external world are not antagonistic to each other. The alienation, in this sense, has more of an ontological nature.

Marx moves away from what he believes to be an idealistic reading of history and humankind and interprets alienation

differently. In Marx, alienation significantly indicates the following things, all of which have a materialistic and economic orientation: a) objectification of things after production, b) self-alienation (alienation of the labourer from their own activity of production), c) alienation from other people (alienation of people from people due to the antagonistic classes they are in). To begin with, witnessing a massive industrialist revolution in his times, Marx viewed the forces of modern capitalism as manipulating the labourers in an attempt to increase productivity and output, resulting in the workers losing hope and determination. The manipulative nature of capitalism lies in the fact that capitalism is directed towards specific goals and objectives, that is, maximum profit and accumulation of wealth. The labourers or the working class are considered to be instruments in the capitalist system, which leads to the loss of their personal identity.

Alienation means that as we are living in a stratified capitalist society which is based on class and class consciousness, the labourers are compelled to sell their human power, strength, capacities, expertise and skill to those who have ownership over the capital. That is to say, the labourers would have no say or control over their labour products and over the labour itself, which has become their life activity. Working people put everything, including their lives, into jobs but get nothing or little in return. In short, labourers or the working class become only a means to an end for the capitalists who make them estranged from their labour and products and render them victims of alienation. While Marx views this alienation as multi-dimensional and encompasses the religious, political, social and economic areas of life, he stresses the economic aspects. This brings class conflict and estrangement between both classes as well.

The major concepts in Marx are intertwined. The idea of alienated labour is central to the Marxian critique of capitalism and the class struggle. He states: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles". Also, the criticism of capitalism is based on his criticism of private property. Marx believes that the division between the bourgeoise, the owners of the means of production in the modern capitalist society and the proletariat, the working class, arises from the existence of private property. As long as a property is a product of another human's work, it creates human alienation. The alienation of the working class under the ruling class is not

- Alienation has multiple layers and aspects in Marx

- Workers are forced to sell their human capital, expertise and skill to those who have ownership over the capital

- Human history is the history of class struggles

merely by the latter holding economic power or ownership of wealth but also by controlling the political power. The conflicts between owners and the working class are irreconcilable and are the inevitable result of industrial capitalism, as the working class is systematically exploited under the same. Marx, like Hegel, also attributes work or labour as an inherent quality of human beings. The former emphasises that labour is the only real source of wealth; however, in search of the maximum profit, the capitalists or the bourgeoise pay the workers less than the value of their labour.

Under capitalism, labour is reduced to a mere commodity when it becomes depersonalised. In the situations of depersonalised or commodified labour, workers' efforts enrich and empower those who oppress them. They become the victims of their work. The dignity of the activity of the work, which is essential to human nature, is denied under such conditions of alienated labour. The crisis of overproduction and alienation will gradually bring a revolution of the workers when they form a class, an identity, and a collective consciousness, which becomes a national struggle and a proletariat revolution against the bourgeoisie. The proletarian revolution will witness a massive seizure of the means of production and will lead to a dictatorship of the proletariat in an eventual transition to socialism. After the socialist state comes into being, Marx affirms, class antagonism and alienation will fade away, and a fully communist 'society' will emerge. That is to say, the proletariat 'state' is not essentially an end product of the revolution of the working class; rather, the state would wither away and give place to a communist 'society.' A communist society would exist as a classless society and would eliminate all private properties. All the private properties would be owned in common by all, the commodity production would be aimed at maximum benefits, and greed would be replaced by production for use aimed at the satisfaction of human needs.

- Revolution will lead to a dictatorship of the proletariat and then eventually to socialism

3.1.4 Criticisms

Marxism exerted a major influence and impact on socialist thought, triggered political movements, and brought revolutionary governments into power during the 20th century. It helped to consolidate and inspire the working class and radicalise the labour and socialist movements across the world. At the same time, it has also faced severe criticism from various angles and perspectives. The criticisms against Marxism can-

- Intellectual, social and political objections raised against Marxism

not be taken as arguments against straw men; they are substantial intellectual, social, and political objections.

One major criticism against Marxism is that it is finished and has no relevance in today's world. It made sense and had some relevance in a world of factories and food riots, coal miners and chimney sweeps, misery and masses of the working class. In increasingly classless, socially mobile, post-industrial societies such as ours, Marxism has no bearing or standing. Another significant criticism is against Marxism as a practice in the world. Marxism may be a good idea or theory. However, history has shown us that whenever it has been put into practice, it has paved the way for the concentration of power, terror and tyranny and has ended up in mass murders. As a theory, it emerged with a call for universal emancipation of the common men and women. However, for common men and women, in practice, it has brought hardship, torture and forced labour, devastated the economic system and one of the most oppressive states in world history. Marxism in practice has ended up in totalitarianism, authoritarianism, repression, and violation of fundamental human rights and communist states like the Soviet Union, Maoist China, and other communist states have failed to achieve any sort of democratic and egalitarian society envisioned by Marx. The 'dictatorship of the proletariat', in theory, was a mere dictatorship of some bureaucratic elite with centralised power and accumulated wealth.

The third criticism is about the determinism in Marxism. That is, Marxism is a form of determinism, seeing human beings simply as the tools of history. It strips humans of their freedom, agency and individuality. Marx believed and propagated certain iron laws of history, which worked themselves with force without human actions having any resistance power. Feudalism was deterministic and fated to give birth to capitalism, which would inevitably give way to socialism. Along with historical determinism, Marxism also upholds economic determinism, reducing everything to economic factors. However, the economy does not determine everything in the human-social world.

Marxism has also been severely and harshly criticised as a utopia. It believes in the possibility of a perfect society, a heaven on earth without hardship, suffering, conflicts or violence. Keeping itself in contrast to modern industrial capitalism, which aims at the accumulation of wealth and private property, Marxism makes an insubstantial claim that

- Marxism as theory versus practice

- Maximum in practice has ended up in totalitarianism and authoritarianism

- Historic and economic determinism

the communist state will be free from any kind of rivalry, selfishness or possession. There will not be any competition, inequality or inferiority of any section with human beings living in complete harmony with one another and with an endless flow of material goods and exchange of them. This naive vision of human nature arises from a blind and uncritical faith in human nature and its viciousness, natural selfishness, competitiveness and aggressiveness.

Summarized Overview

Marx's political philosophy revolves around the concepts that analyse and critique the structure and evolution of society. Historical materialism and historical determinism are central to Marx's thought, which asserts that the material conditions of society - its economic base - determine its superstructure, which includes culture, politics, and ideology. This causal relationship implies that changes in the monetary base lead to corresponding changes in the superstructure. Marx's theory of alienation describes how workers in a capitalist system become estranged from their labour, the products of their labour, and their human potential, as their work is commodified and controlled by the bourgeoisie. The different modes of production described by Marx, such as slavery, feudalism, and modern capitalism, and the relations and conditions of production that characterise them emphasise that societal changes occur through class struggle or class war. The critique of capitalism involves a detailed examination of various historical modes of production, which suggest that each mode has inherent contradictions that eventually lead to its downfall and the rise of a new mode. In capitalism, the exploitation and alienation of workers create tensions that could lead to revolutionary change.

Marx affirms that he stands in contrast to the philosophers who interpreted history hitherto and wanted to change the same. Towards this aim, he moves away from traditional metaphysical and philosophical approaches and speculations, advocating for a scientific, empirical study of society and history over speculative philosophy. The scientific approach includes analysing the causes and effects of beliefs and ideologies, viewing them as part of the material conditions rather than as independent truths. Marx's materialism emphasizes the empirical and causal nature of social evolution, providing a scientific basis for his theories and contrasting sharply with what he calls Hegel's idealist dialectics. This emphasis on empirical evidence and causality aligns more closely with Hume's empiricism, rejecting any notion of *a priori* necessity in understanding the world. However, there has been much criticism against the historical and economic determinism of Marxism and its untested and insubstantial claims or predictions on the historical process and evolution.

Self-Assessment

1. What is the base and superstructure in Marxism? Elaborate on the idea that the base determines the superstructure

2. What is historical materialism?

3. Write on historic determinism and economic determinism in Marxism

Assignments

1. Elaborate alienation in Marxism.

2. What are the major criticisms against Marxism? Critically evaluate them by expressing your own views.

3. Write about the significance of modes of production, forces of production and relations of production in Marxism.

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UNIT 2
Ambedkar's Theory of Social Justice

Learning Outcomes

By the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand Ambedkar's political philosophy in general
- recognize Ambedkar's strong efforts to annihilate caste system and practices
- grasp Ambedkar's contributions to the architecture of modern India
- value and appreciate Ambedkar's efforts to establish social, economic and political justice

Background

Dr. B. R Ambedkar (1891-1956) belonged to the Scheduled Castes (the then 'untouchables'), and his education was achieved in the face of significant discrimination. In his autobiographical note, *Waiting for a Visa*, he recalls how he was not allowed in his childhood to drink water from the common water taps at his school, with a notice there was "no peon, no water". Despite all the social discrimination and boycotts, Ambedkar achieved his education and emerged as an influential social and political leader of modern India. Ambedkar's thoughts, writings and social strikes and movements must be understood against two backdrops; Primarily, against British colonial rule in India, a period marked by social stratification, economic exploitation, and rising national consciousness; Secondly, against caste discrimination, depressed lives of the untouchables and their movements and struggles for emancipation and justice.

Keywords

Untouchable, Social justice, Social movement, Social democracy, Equality

Discussion

3.2.1 Glimpses of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Life

- Caste discrimination and Ambedkar's struggles

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was born in Maharashtra on 14 April 1891 in the Mahar caste, one of the 'untouchable' castes. Ambedkar faced severe hardships, caste discrimination and social boycott in his life, which profoundly shaped his worldview and fuelled his commitment to anti-caste movements and rights and social justice for the oppressed. He completed his secondary education at Elphinstone High School in Bombay.

Ambedkar graduated from Bombay University in 1912 with a B.A. in Economics and Political Science. On account of his excellent performance at college, in 1913, he was awarded a scholarship by Sayajirao Gaikwad, the then Maharaja (King) of Baroda state, to pursue his M.A. and Ph.D. at Columbia University in New York, USA. He submitted his Ph.D. thesis on "The Evolution of Provincial Finance in India: A Study in the Provincial Decentralization of Imperial Finance". After studying and doing research in Columbia, Ambedkar moved to London, registered at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) to study economics, and enrolled in Grey's Inn to study law. However, due to financial issues and lack of funds, he returned to India in 1917 and 1918, where he became a professor of political economy at Sydenham College, Bombay. During this time, he submitted a statement to the Southborough Committee demanding a universal adult franchise. In 1920, with financial assistance from Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj of Kolhapur, personal loans and some savings from his time in India, Ambedkar returned to London to complete his education. In 1922, he was called to the bar and became a barrister-at-law.

- Ambedkar's journey for education

- Ambedkar as a barrister and social discrimination

After returning to India, he tried to settle down as a lawyer in Bombay, but as an untouchable caste, he found it hard to attract clients. Deeply hurt, he decided to devote his life to campaigning against the evils of the caste system. In that attempt, he founded Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha (Society for Welfare of the Ostracized). He led social movements such as Mahad Satyagraha in 1927. His fundamental demands include justice and equal access to public resources for the historically oppressed castes. In the same year, he entered the Bombay Legislative Council as a nominated member. He then dedicated himself completely to the upliftment of the untouchable castes and the oppressed communities and became an influential leader of the masses.

Ambedkar vehemently fought against the caste system and other social evils of Indian society, and to mobilise his followers and properly channel his fight for social justice, he established organisations such as the Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha, Independent Labour Party and later All India Scheduled Caste Federation. Ambedkar fought and led a number of temple-entry Satyagrahas, demanding temple entry for the lower castes, organised the untouchables and established many educational institutions. In 1920, Ambedkar entered into the world of newspapers and utilised them as the best means to create awareness of caste and social injustice among the masses. He started his first newspaper, Mooknayak, a Marathi fortnightly, which literally translates to the leader of the voiceless, on January 31, 1920. It ran for three years before being closed. Later, he went on to found three more newspapers, Bahishkrut Bharat (1927-1929), Janata (1930-56), and Prabuddha Bharat (1956).

Despite its short life of just three years, Mooknayak laid strong foundations of an assertive, vocal and organised Dalit politics. Its publication was a strong pronouncement about the arrival of a newer generation of politics of assertion and anti-caste politics that challenged the dominant social diseases and could break the confines of region, language, caste and political boundaries and set larger social and political developments on the nationalist scene. Ambedkar's newspapers became an instructive exercise for many forthcoming generations of Ambedkarite activists and organisations who have since drawn lessons in social movements and politics from them and have been conducting and publishing various newspapers since then.

• Ambedkar's mission
with newspapers

• Chairman of the
Drafting Committee
of the Constitution

Ambedkar participated in all three Round Table Conferences (1930-32) in London and strongly projected his views in the interest of the 'untouchables'. The 1930s witnessed Ambedkar's transition to party politics, and he demanded a separate electorate for the untouchables from the British. In 1936, Ambedkar created his first political party, the Independent Labour Party, which contested 17 seats in the 1937 elections in the Bombay province and won 15 of them. On 15 August 1947, Ambedkar took oath as the first Law Minister of independent India and lasted thus till 1951. On 29 August 1947, the Constituent Assembly set up a Drafting Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to prepare a Draft Constitution for India and played a very important role in framing the Indian Constitution.

Ambedkar's dedication to social activism, social reformism, and justice is reflected in his thoughts and decisions about conversion. After various efforts to reform the philosophical foundations of Hinduism, Ambedkar was convinced that Hinduism does not exist without a caste system and that it cannot modify its disposition towards the untouchables as the varna system has roots in the sacred texts. In 1956, he left Hinduism, embraced Buddhism after considering various religions, and appealed to his followers to do the same. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism was part of the reassertion of his faith in a religion based on humanism. He was influenced by Buddhism mainly due to its rejection of the authority of Vedas which are the prime source of caste system. He was also influenced by the spirit of equality and liberty propounded by Buddhism. The main goal and message of his conversion were the removal of injustice and exploitation. He firmly believed that by adopting Buddhism, the untouchables and the lower castes would be able to carve out their own self, identity and dignity.

According to Ambedkar, for the untouchables to lead a new material life, a new spiritual basis consistent with the liberal spirit was essential, which he found in Buddhism. He was of the view, unlike Gandhi, that the removal of untouchability and the spiritual upliftment of the untouchable castes is not possible by remaining a Hindu. Ambedkar's engagements with the Indian independence movement, activities for social justice and his role in drafting the Indian Constitution highlight his multifaceted approach to achieving social justice through social, political, economic, educational and constitutional means and reforms.

Beyond being a social reformer, influencer and a democratic political leader of the masses, Ambedkar is an acute scholar and modern Indian thinker. He wrote extensively on various social and political problems. Some of his significant writings include: *'Annihilation of Castes'*, *'Who Were the Shudras'*, *'The Untouchables*, *'Buddha and His Dharma.'* Throughout his life, Ambedkar upheld the principles of equality, equity, liberty and fraternity, and thus, he became the architect of modern constitutional India. With his education in the West and exposure to modern Western liberalism, along with his deep-rooted social experience in India as an untouchable, he could think sharply ahead of time. John Dewey, Jotirao Phule, and Buddha have had enormous influences on Ambedkar's ideas

about society, religion, morality, and spirituality.

3.2.2 Attack on Caste: *Annihilation of Caste*

Annihilation of Caste is one of the most radical texts written in India. It is a comprehensive critique of the social institution of caste, which Ambekar unleashed a scathing attack on Indian society and social structure. *Annihilation of Caste* is the text of a speech that Dr Ambedkar, one of Modern India's great intellectuals and social reformists, wrote but never delivered. In 1936, Ambedkar was invited to Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal (Society for the Break Up of Caste System), an offshoot of the Arya Samaj, a Hindu reformist organisation dominated by upper castes. The Mandal, which invited Ambedkar to address its members, disinvited him after they read an advance copy of the text and found that it was an attack on Hinduism itself. Ambedkar then went on to publish *Annihilation of Caste* as a pamphlet, which brought a conspicuous shift in the socio-political discourse on caste and untouchability in India.

Ambedkar's critique of the caste system becomes unique for its acute examination of the caste and Dalit question from various angles, including its origins, history, evolution, and inhuman and vicious practice and implementation. The text unleashes a strong attack on every possible defence of the caste system, including the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi. Also, it puts forth various socio-economic, political and legal methods for the annihilation of the caste and emancipation of the Dalits.

The caste system is known in Hinduism's founding texts as *varnashrama dharma* or *chaturvarna*, the system of four varnas. There are approximately four thousand endogamous castes and sub-castes (jatis), which are believed and practised in Hindu society, with each having its own specified hereditary occupation. These castes and sub-castes are divided into four varnas - Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (soldiers), Vaishyas (traders) and Shudras (servants). Outside of these varnas are placed the avarna castes, the ati-Shudras, and subhumans, which are arranged in their own hierarchies. The avarna castes or outcastes are the Untouchables, the Unseables, the Unapproachables - whose presence, whose sight, whose touch, whose very shadow was considered and believed to be polluting to the upper caste Hindus.

Sidebar notes:
- Radical text of a speech which was never delivered
- Annihilation of Caste and the strong rebuttal of any defence of the caste system
- Caste hierarchy

One major defence of the caste system was that it was a division of labour. Ambedkar spent a sufficient number of pages attacking the notion that caste is merely a division of labour and asserting that it rather was a division of labourers that dehumanises and exploits individuals based on their birth. He stated: "Civilized society undoubtedly needs division of labour. But in no civilised society is division of labour accompanied by this unnatural division of labourers into watertight compartments. The Caste System is not merely a division of labourers, which is quite different from the division of labour - it is a hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one above the other. In no other country is the division of labour accompanied by this gradation of labourers."

- Caste is not a division of labour but division of labourers graded one over above

Another point that Ambedkar raised against the caste system was that it denied any mobility of the followers of Hinduism from the situation of their birth. He stated: "An ideal society should be mobile, should be full of channels for conveying a change taking place in one part to other parts. In an ideal society, there should be many interests that are consciously communicated and shared. There should be varied and free points of contact with other modes of association. In other words, there must be social endosmosis. This is a fraternity, which is only another name for democracy." According to him, democracy is not merely a form of government. Rather, it is primarily a way of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. It is an attitude of respect towards our fellow men.

- Mobility as an important characteristic of progressive society

Ambedkar contends that the caste system violates the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. An ideal society, according to Ambedkar, is based on freedom, equality, and fraternity, and Indian society stands in opposition to all these principles. He highlighted the ways in which the caste system perpetuates economic exploitation, social discrimination, and psychological degradation. According to Ambedkar, caste-based discrimination undermines social cohesion and hinders the progress of the entire nation. He called for a complete annihilation of caste as a prerequisite for achieving true social justice and democracy in India.

- Caste system and its violation of liberty, equality and fraternity

Ambedkar's critical scrutiny of the effects of the caste system on Hindu society and Hindu religion is important. He stated that the caste system had made Hindu society stagnant. Due to the caste system, according to Ambedkar, Hindu society is unable to accommodate outsiders, and this creates permanent

problems for integration. It creates problems not merely for integration of the 'outsiders'; rather, the Hindu society is not able to satisfy the test of a homogenous society. "Hindu Society as such does not exist. It is only a collection of castes. Each caste is conscious of its existence." The caste system perpetrates sheer injustice on the lower castes, instils demoralisation of the lower castes and does not allow them to progress. It only compels them to live under humiliation, moral degradation and indignity. A caste has no feeling that it is affiliated with other castes; castes do not allow an associated mode of life of the Hindus, and castes do not even form a federation. Ambedkar viewed this compartmentalisation and stagnation of Hindu society as not only an obstacle to the growth of Hindu society but also to the growth of the national spirit.

- Caste system as a threat to the unity and integration of the nation

3.2.3 Caste System and Dalit Question: Gandhi-Ambedkar Debate

Gandhi-Ambedkar debate is significant, and Ambedkar himself brings some of its portions passionately to the *Annihilation of the Caste.* Ambedkar's staunch criticism of Gandhi with regard to the latter's soft stand on the caste system was an unavoidable historical encounter which enriched the Indian struggle for freedom. Ambedkar, the Untouchable, was heir to the anticaste intellectual tradition that dates back to 200 - 100 BCE. Gandhi, a Vaishya, born into a Gujarati Bania family, was the latest in a long tradition of the privileged-caste Hindu reformers and their organisations. Gandhi was revered and worshipped by millions of people in his lifetime, and his godliness is universal.

- Gandhi-Ambedkar debate on caste system and Dalits

Gandhi never assertively and categorically renounced his belief in chaturvarna, the system of four varnas. Ambedkar's point was that believing in the Hindu shastras and simultaneously thinking of oneself as liberal or moderate is a contradiction. On this point, Ambedkar launched strong criticism against Gandhi and the Congress, which was then fighting the British from the front. Ambedkar's question was not whether Congress was fighting for the freedom of India but for whose freedom was the Congress fighting. Ambedkar affirmed: "It is foolish to take solace in the fact that because the Congress is fighting for the freedom of India, it is, therefore, fighting for the freedom of the people of India and of the lowest of the low." In 1931, when Ambedkar met Gandhi for the first time, Gandhi questioned Ambekar about his sharp criticism of the Congress - which was then identical to criticising the struggle for the Homeland.

- Gandhi's soft stand on the caste system

- Ambedkar's criticism of Gandhi and Congress

Ambedkar responded to Gandhi that, as an untouchable, he did not have any Homeland.

The differences and disagreements between Gandhi and Ambedkar became sharp and fierce in accordance with the different approaches both took towards caste. With his thoughts and reflections enriched by his life experiences and situations, while Ambedkar called for the destruction of the caste system, Gandhi took a soft stand. Gandhi never wanted to abolish the caste system as such, rather only to remove the vices of the caste system.

Ambedkar diagnosed the root causes of the caste system and insisted on the total destruction of the same and empowerment of the untouchables through social, cultural, political and legal measures. The fierce differences between Gandhi and Ambedkar were clearly revealed during the 1920s and early 1930s when the debates about resolving untouchability through political empowerment of the untouchables arose. Gandhi persisted with a socio-humanist approach to the problem. Gandhi declared that the untouchables were not inferior and they should be regarded as 'Harijans' or 'Gods people'. He decried the practice of untouchability and rejected the idea that any occupation attributes a social status to the people. However, his notion that untouchability should be eradicated through self-enlightenment of the people came in sharp contrast to Ambedkar's approach of waging movements and struggles against the very idea of the caste system. Gandhi did not support the eradication of the caste but wanted to maintain it as a social unit by removing the practice of untouchability. This led to a sharp encounter with Ambedkar, who had upheld the historical annihilation of caste as one of the cherished goals of his life. Gandhi's soft stand on the matter was also clear when he appeared willing to accept intermarriage as a means of eradicating the vices of the caste system and yet did not want a total eradication of the caste even in the 1940s.

The idea of political representation for untouchables also revealed the fundamental differences between Ambedkar and Gandhi. After watching the function of the reserved constituency system for about one decade, Ambedkar was convinced that the representatives elected from reserved constituency were able neither to ensure the political empowerment of Dalits nor to take the issues of atrocities against them. They were also not in a position to provide the economic development of Dalits in

- Ambedkar for total annihilation of caste

- Gandhi for removal of the vices of the case system

- Ambedkar's urge for the political empowerment of Dalits

- Ambedkar's demand for a separate electorate for Dalits

Parliament and influence government action in favour of SC/ST. In order to end this dismal condition, SC/STs should be able to elect their own representatives separately.

Ambedkar's point is that the SC/ST representatives elected from the reserved constituencies are elected by all voters, including SCs, STs and general. In most such cases, Ambedkar argued, the number of voters who are against the freedom of SCs and STs is a lot more than the number of SCs and STs in particular constituencies. Thus, the people who are elected in this process do not work for the Dalits but for those who elected them. It is to end this condition of the depressed castes and to specifically empower them that Ambedkar demanded a separate electorate or constituency of voters in central and provincial assemblies. Ambedkar stressed in the second session of the Round Table conference that power should be shared by all communities in their respective proportion.

- Ambedkar's disapproval of reserved constituency

Gandhi vehemently opposed Ambedkar's demand for a separate electorate and went on to fast unto death in protest against it. Gandhi was against that idea as he felt that untouchables were part of the Hindu community, and a separate electorate would render them outside the folds of Hinduism and would eventually weaken the Hindu community. However, Ambedkar openly argued that there was no link between the Hindus and the depressed classes and that they must be considered as distinct and independent communities. While Gandhi prioritised socio-cultural reforms, Ambedkar prioritised political rights over cultural reforms. In an intensified atmosphere of disagreements between two leaders of modern India, the leaders of Congress persuaded Ambedkar to help save the life of Gandhi. In the end, under public pressure, Ambedkar gave in to Gandhi and dropped his demand, and the Poona pact was signed between the Congress party and Ambedkar in September 1932. This pact nullified the Communal Award of August 4, 1932, a proposal by the British government which allotted seats in different legislatures of India to the various communities in order to resolve tensions between communities.

- Ambedkar's withdrawal from the demand for a separate electorate and the Poona pact

3.2.4 Removal of Untouchability

Ambedkar proposed various methods and strategies to re-move the untouchability and bring emancipation of the untouchables. He strongly believed and propagated that neither a nation nor a moral code of conduct can be built on the foundation of a caste system. Ambedkar proposed the following

strategies. He proposed inter-caste marriages to break down social barriers and promote social integration and education to empower the lower casts and promote their social mobility. He insisted on land reforms and policies to ensure equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. He also brought legislative measures to prohibit caste-based discrimination and to protect the rights of the lower castes. He fought for social reformations to promote social and cultural changes and to challenge the discriminatory practices and attitudes.

Ambedkar strongly believed that inter-dining and inter-caste marriages can effectively destroy the caste. But he also realised the fact that people will not be ready to marry outside their castes as long as casteism dominates their minds and thoughts. He was determined to build a caste-less society that is not based on the principle of hereditary but on the principles of equality, liberty, and fraternity.

3.2.5 On Social and Political Democracy

Ambedkar's life mission was social justice for the oppressed and marginalised castes, classes and communities. But, to reach the goal of social justice, he chose the means of democracy. However, democracy never meant a mere political democracy, a democracy of numbers, a democracy of processing elections and a rule of the majority for him. Rather, Ambedkar strongly maintained a position that political democracy cannot exist without social democracy, without democracy being believed and practised at the grassroots level of social and economic spheres.

In his great speech to the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949, Ambedkar stated that India was at a critical juncture and warned against the existing trends and potential threats to independent India if it did not nurture strong checks and balances in the social, economic and political spheres. Ambedkar delivered a crucial lecture on social, economic and political democracy and social justice. He promisingly stated that on 26 January 1950, India would be an independent country, but he also strongly warned the constituent assembly whether India would maintain her independence or she lose it again. He worried that India would lose its independence a second time.

Ambedkar urged the constituent assembly and the people of India to maintain democracy not merely in form but also as fact. Democracy in mere forms is about processing elections,

- Different methods for removal of untouchability

- Inter-dining and inter-caste marriages

- Priority for democracy and democratic means

- Disapproval of mere political democracy and priority for social democracy

- Need for maintaining democracy

winning candidates, and ruling by the party that bagged the majority seats. He upheld the view that if Indians wanted to maintain democracy not merely in form but also fact and practice, they must observe the caution that John Stuart Mill gave for preserving democracy: not "to lay their liberties at the feet of even a great man, or to trust him with power which enable him to subvert their institutions".

According to Ambedkar, to be content with mere political democracy would be the biggest threat that Independent India was going to face. Political democracy cannot last unless there is a social democracy at its base. He stated that social democracy was a way of life that recognised liberty, equality, and fraternity as the principles of life. "These principles of liberty, equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy. Liberty cannot be divorced from equality; equality cannot be divorced from liberty; Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity. Without equality, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things. It would require a constable to enforce them."

Ambedkar also insisted the Indian political elites and the common masses acknowledge to the core that there is a complete absence of equality in Indian society. On the social plane, India has a society based on the principle of graded inequality and caste hierarchy, a society in which some have immense wealth as against many who live in abject poverty. Ambedkar viewed this as a great contradiction that Independent India was going to face on social and political planes. He stated: "On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics, we will have equality and in social and economic life, we will have inequality. In politics, we will be recognising the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in

peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has laboriously built up."

Summarized Overview

Ambedkar made profound and transformative contributions to the concept of social justice with his unwavering commitment to eradicating social hierarchies and inequalities entrenched in Indian society. Ambedkar's philosophy of social justice is rooted in his critique of the caste system, which he saw as the most pernicious form of social discrimination. Through his advocacy for the annihilation of caste, Ambedkar sought to dismantle the structures that perpetuate social, economic, and political inequalities. His vision of social justice was not just about legal and political rights but also encompassed the broader dimensions of social and economic empowerment. Ambedkar's emphasis on education, economic opportunities, and political representation for marginalised communities, particularly Dalits, underscores his holistic approach to social justice, where true freedom and equality could only be achieved through the transformation of societal structures and norms.

Ambedkar's theory of social justice is also intricately linked to his ideas on democracy and the role of the state in ensuring equality. He envisioned democracy not merely as a form of government but as a way of life that ensures the dignity and rights of every individual. The state, in Ambedkar's view, has a pivotal role in safeguarding social justice by enacting laws and policies that promote equality and protect the rights of the marginalised. His efforts in drafting the Indian Constitution reflect his commitment to embedding the principles of social justice, equality, and fraternity at the core of Indian democracy. Ambedkar's legacy is a call to continually strive for a just society where all individuals, regardless of caste, class, or gender, have equal opportunities to lead a dignified life.

Self-Assessment

1. What are the means Ambedkar took for the abolition of the caste system? Explain

2. Elaborate and critically evaluate Gandhi-Ambedkar debate on caste and Dalit question

3. Elaborate on Ambedkar's speech to the constituent assembly on November 25, 1949

Assignments

1. Elaborate on Ambedkar's concept of social democracy and its relation to political democracy

2. Write major themes and discussions in Annihilation of Caste.

3. Ambedkar began his political career as a staunch activist, leading movements against caste injustice with a revolutionary zeal. Later, he became a proponent of democracy and democratic means, seemingly setting aside revolutionary methods. How should we evaluate these two phases of Ambedkar's life? Can his shift from revolutionary activism to democratic engagement be seen as a reconciliation of both approaches in the pursuit of social justice?

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

UNIT 3
John Rawls and Amartya Sen: Liberal Theory of Justice

Learning Outcomes

By the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand John Rawls' concepts of the Original Position, the Veil of Ignorance, and the principles of justice

- understand Rawl's theory of justice as fairness and its criticism of previous theories of social justice

- recognise Amartya Sen's Comparative Approach to justice and his critique of traditional theories of justice, including that of Rawls

- understand the strengths and limitations of Rawls and Sen's theories in the context of contemporary issues of justice.

Background

What is justice? What does a just society look like? And what principles should guide us to a just and unbiased society? These questions have occupied the entire tradition of political philosophy, especially the one led by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacque Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and contemporary philosophers like John Rawls, Robert Nozick and Amartya Sen. There have been different approaches to the ideas of justice, just and ideal and the best order of society since Socrates till the contemporary times. John Rawls put forth an idea of justice that differed from his predecessors. At the same time, Amartya Sen critiqued the entire tradition of Western political philosophy, including that of John Rawls and their quest for an ideal society built on the highest form of justice. Instead, Amartya Sen relied more on practical conceptions and implementational aspects of justice.

Discussion

3.3.1 John Rawls and Amartya Sen: Introduction to Liberal Theory of Justice

John Rawls (1921 - 2002) is an American political philosopher in the liberal tradition. He held the James Bryant Conant University Professorship at Harvard University. He was influenced by philosophers and political thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and others. The most discussed and studied theme is his theory of a just liberal society founded on the idea of 'justice as fairness'. Rawls at first set out the theory of 'justice as fairness' systematically and in detail in his book, *A Theory of Justice* (1971). He reworked on the same throughout his life, refined and restated the theory in his book *Political Liberalism* (1993), *The Law of Peoples* (1999), and *Justice as Fairness* (2001).

- American philosopher and liberal tradition

The theory of 'justice as fairness,' one of the most interesting theories to have emerged in modern times, is a response to previous theories of justice such as utilitarianism and libertarianism. It is an attempt to resolve competing claims of freedom and equality dominant in modern moral philosophy. To get into a theory like any other theories of justice, this specific theory also asks two fundamental questions, "which type of society do we want to live in?" and "What is a good society?" Rawls is trying to answer to these questions through his theory of justice as fairness. This normative theory of justice underlying a society basically assumes a society of free citizens who have equal basic rights and cooperate within an egalitarian economic system.

- Fairness as the foundation of the theory of justice

- Theories of justice ask the question, "What is a good society?"

According to Rawls, justice is the first virtue of social institutions. In that sense, utilitarianism, which holds that right and just action from the individuals or the government is what gives the biggest happiness to the biggest number of people, offends our basic sense of justice. Rawls views that, at the core, justice can be formulated in some principles which utilitarianism cannot consider as fundamental. The most fundamental principle is that each person has a right to the most

extensive basic liberties, such as the right to vote, freedom of speech and assembly, liberty of conscience and freedom of thought, right to stand for public office, and freedom to hold personal property. Utilitarianism stands by curtailing these basic liberties with its foundational principle that we ought to seek the greatest balance of satisfaction over dissatisfaction for society as a whole. That is, utilitarianism holds that an action is right if it gives the biggest happiness to the biggest number of people. According to this principle, violation of the basic liberties of an individual or of a minority is justified if that violation causes sufficient satisfaction to the majority. This philosophy would justify slavery or suppression of the very political rights, which are basic notions of constitutional government. In response to this background of dominant theories of justice, Rawls proposes his theory of justice as fairness.

Amartya Sen (1993-), an eminent economist and Nobel-prize winner in 1998, puts forth a powerful critique of the theory of social justice dominant in the tradition of political philosophy, including justice as fairness. Amartya Sen criticises the approach to understanding justice propounded by Enlightenment thinkers and classical writers like Hobbes and Rousseau and further developed by contemporary thinkers such as Rawls, Nozick, and Dworkin as 'transcendental Justice' or 'transcendental institutionalism.' The focus of this approach, according to him, is on distinguishing between the just and the unjust and creating institutions that would ensure a just society. This approach entertains the notions of 'ideal justice', which is universal and applies everywhere. Against this approach, he advocates for what he calls the comparative theory of justice as the theory of 'global justice.'

Amartya Sen became an unavoidable figure in contemporary socio-economic and political thought. He authored many books which have had a profound impact on Indian socio-economic and political thought. Some of his works are *Development as Freedom* (1999), *The Argumentative Indian (2005), Capability Approach: Concepts, Measures and Applications* (2008), and *The Idea of Justice* (2009).

3.3.2 John Rawls on Roles of Political Philosophy

Rawls views political philosophy as playing and fulfilling four roles in the public life of a society or the public po-

- Utilitarianism violates the fundamental principle of justice

- Amartya Sen's criticism of 'transcendental justice' or 'transcendental institutionalism'

- Sen's influence on contemporary socio-economic and political thought

litical culture of a society. The first role is a practical one that arises from divisive political conflicts and the need to settle the problems of order and structure. Political philosophy provides a framework for finding common ground amidst deep and sharp divides and conflicts that risk escalating into violence. That is, divisive conflicts lead to political philosophy. Rawls cites various philosophers' works as fulfilling this role. One of the main historical origins of liberalism is the Wars of Religion that occurred in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries following the Reformation.

Hobbes's *Leviathan (1651)* was an attempt to solve the problem of order in society during the English Civil War (1642-1651) caused by a colossal clash of ideas between King Charles I of England (1625-1649) and his parliament. This period witnessed arguments and debates over the powers and limitations of the monarchy, finances and questions of religious practices and toleration, and the conflict of leaders with personalities who held their place high and affirmed their own cause. All these ended up in the deaths of thousands and the execution of the King, abolition of the monarch and the proclamation of England as a republic.

Leviathan thus argued that civil war and the brute situation of a state of nature ("the war of all against all") could only be avoided through a social contract and rule by an absolute sovereign and undivided government. Locke's *Letter on Toleration,* argued against government involvement in matters of religion, advocated for a separation of Church and state, and rejected absolutism. It was a response to the Wars of Religion as well as the philosophy that emerged from the debates over the US Constitution, and extension of slavery before the American civil war. Hobbes gave a general theory of human nature and proposed what Judith Shklar calls 'liberalism of fear,' which aimed to prescribe a form of government best suited to the task of preventing violence and maintaining civil peace. Rawls differs from Hobbes in what he calls 'the public culture of a democratic society.' In short, the first role of political philosophy is to focus on deeply disputed and divisive questions and to see if some underlying basis of philosophical and moral agreement can be uncovered despite all the apparent differences and divisions.

The second role of political philosophy is to contribute to how people think of their social and political institutions as a whole. Its role is to contribute to how their aims, interests and

purposes as a society with a history (nation) are in opposition to their aims, interests and purposes as individuals or as members of families or other private associations. In other words, political philosophy helps citizens understand their place within their social world and orient them within the same. It helps them know what it means to be a member of a specific society or what it means to be an equal citizen with equal rights in a democracy. It provides them with a framework to address the conflicting and divisive questions about how one individual in this political context should relate to another. The third role, according to Rawls, is to investigate the limits and boundaries of political possibility. Political philosophy, on the one hand, must outline workable political arrangements that can attract support from people and, on the other hand, within the practical limits, it can be utopian by imagining the best social order that we can dream of.

The fourth role of political philosophy is achieving our reconciliation with our society and history: "to calm our frustration and rage against our society and its history by showing us the way in which its institutions… are rational, and developed over time as they did to attain their present, rational form". It will ease our frustration by showing us that social institutions have developed over time to their current rational form; human life is not mere domination, prejudice, corruption and violence; rather, there is a rational progression and improvement of social institutions.

3.3.3 Political Liberalism

Rawls' theory of political liberalism addresses and envisions the culture of a constitutional democracy. It fundamentally deals with the question, i.e. what is the most just and feasible arrangement of basic social institutions and establishments that realises the core democratic values of freedom and equality for all citizens? To put it more specifically, citizens, as individuals in a free society, have their own interests, intentions, beliefs, inclinations, orientations, values, and disparate worldviews. They may hold diverse sets of religious beliefs, practices and moral values or none at all, may have different notions of good and bad, right and wrong, and their views may vary and dis-agree on how to live and what relationships to value. Given that situation, how can they be dealt with both freedom and equality?

The fundamental problem that political liberalism

addresses is that, despite all the conflicting and contradictory commitments, a country can only have one law which must decide on establishing a national church or not, granting equal rights to enslaved people or not, permitting abortion and suicide or not, and structuring the economy in a specific way. What must be that law? It asks: How can we build a just and stable society of equal citizens who are members of different and contradictory cultural, religious, moral, and philosophical beliefs, practices, and values yet are not divided on those grounds? What demarcates and delimits the legitimate use of political power in a democracy? How can civic unity endure despite the diversity of worldviews that free institutions allow? Rawls addresses these questions through his concept of political liberalism.

Lock and Kant's tradition of political philosophy originally has its roots in the idea of inherent moral sovereignty and autonomy of each individual. The political liberalism implies the limitations on the ways in which the state can legitimately and reasonably restrict the liberty of individuals. This is so despite the fact that the state is granted a monopoly of force and order through the social contract to serve the collective interests and preserve the peace among the people. The protected liberties of political liberalism include freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of the conduct of private life, and the use of private property. Mill upholds that the state's authority is restricted to ensure rules that maximise societal happiness. To contextualise Rawls' theory in this tradition, in Thomas Nagel's view, Rawls was trying to "combine the strong principles of social and economic equality associated with European socialism with the equally strong principles of pluralistic toleration and personal freedom associated with American liberalism."

According to Rawls, there are two fundamental challenges in imposing a unified law on a diverse citizenry in the context of political liberalism. The first one is the challenge of *legitimacy*; what is the legitimate use of coercive political power or the justifications for the exercise of authority? How does it become legitimate or justified to force or coerce citizens to follow just one law, disregarding their divergent views and worldviews? The second one is the challenge of *stability*: why should a citizenry willingly obey and practice a law which is imposed on them by a collective body whose members have different beliefs and values from their own? This looks at political power

or force from the perspective of the receiving end. As it is well known, without most citizens willingly obeying the law, no social order can be steady and stable for long. Rawls puts forth his theory of *political liberalism* to answer these challenges of legitimacy and stability. Through political liberalism, Rawls is preparing a ground for starting the discussion on his theory of justice as fairness.

Rawls' point in political liberalism is that despite the pluralism of comprehensive doctrines, a fundamentally just society is legitimate and stable. Rawls bases his argument on the notion of public reason, which is an ideal legitimacy that demands that, at the time of fundamental political issues, decisions should be made on the basis of justifications and reasons that every reasonable citizen can understand and accept. Public reason makes room for political legitimacy in the context of unresolved philosophical, religious, cultural and moral disagreements about what is human good. Also, the fundamental disagreements were possible and reasonable as the result of the free use of human rationality under the conditions of open enquiry and free conscience, which themselves function as the foundations of the liberal state and which the liberal state is designed to safeguard. Liberalism, as a political philosophy, holds that a more-than-minimal state is necessary to fulfil the requirements of distributive justice. The state, according to Rawls, must engage in redistributive taxation in order to ensure that a fair distribution of wealth and income is attained in the society it governs.

- Role of public reason in giving legitimacy and stability

3.3.4 Rawlsian Principles of Justice: Justice as Fairness

What a model society should look like? How should we or-ganise the basic structure of society? How should economic distributions and practices be organised? Rawls summarises his position on these questions with the slogan 'justice as fair-ness.' Rawls asks us to imagine certain principles of justice that reasonable persons would accept in a specially designed hypo-thetical decision procedure. He asks us to imagine an 'original position' where no one knows their place in society, class posi-tion and social status and principles of justice are selected un-der this 'veil of ignorance' ruling out knowledge of particular identities and contexts. This ensures fairness and impartiality in establishing societal arrangements.

- Envisaging impartiality in the justice approach

According to Rawls, this thought experiment of the 'veil of

ignorance' and 'original position' would tell us what an original structure of society should look like. He states: "Among the essential position of this situation is that none knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength and the like. I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities. The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance."

- Imagine yourself from an original position where you do not know about your position

To elaborate on the original position, as all people are biased by their situations, how can people agree on a 'social contract' to govern how the world should work? According to Rawls, the only way to theorise a just society is by imagining that we do not know which place we should take in it. That is to say; we should imagine ourselves sitting behind a veil of ignorance that prevents us from knowing who we/others are, where in the social order and position we/others are and from identifying with our/others' personal circumstances. We are ignorant about ourselves and others, and hence, we are not in a place to determine or apply the principles of justice. This ignorance of our circumstances and situations, Rawls says, should lead us to objectively consider how societies should operate. While it is obvious that none could ever be in such an original position, Rawl uses the original position as a device to rule out the principle of justice, which rests on the assumption that fundamental interests of some people are inherently more worthy of concern and respect than others. Justice as fairness advocates for redistributive measures to achieve social and economic equality. Justice as fairness, in short, envisages society as a fair system of cooperation.

- Original position as a devise a system of justice where all are equal and worthy

3.3.5 Amartya Sen's Comparative Justice

Amartya Sen's book *The Idea of Justice* is both an extension and critique of John Rawls' book *Theory of Justice.* Sen talks about *niti* and *nyaya*, with the former relating to just rules and the latter referring to realisation. *Niti* is an abstract exercise that, if implemented completely, would result in maximum public welfare and justice. Nyaya, on the other hand, relates to the enforcement of laws and regulations. Amartya Sen states that while previous theories of justice put forth idealised theories of justice, the comparative approach to justice does the practical evaluation of justice, focusing on reducing injustice and making concrete improvements in the real world. To put it

specifically, while the former theories of justice in the tradition of political philosophy wanted to ensure the creation of institutions that would ensure a perfectly just society, the comparative theory of justice aims to improve society by removing specific injustices. Amartya Sen's aim is "to clarify how we can proceed to address questions of enhancing justice and removing injustice, rather than to offer resolutions of questions about the nature of perfect justice."

Rejecting what he calls 'transcendental justice,' Amartya Sen strongly proposes a comparative approach to justice. He argues that justice should be assessed by comparing different social arrangements to determine which is more just rather than identifying a perfectly just society. Social justice cannot be an ideal, forever beyond our grasp, as it has been conceptualised till now; rather, it could be one of many practical possibilities. Amartya Sen disagrees with the previous theories of justice as they all considered justice a matter of intellectual discourse without actually examining how the idea of justice plays a real role in how and how well people live their real lives. According to him, in order to understand what justice is, it is necessary to understand what injustice is and how to mitigate it.

Amartya Sen points out the strong bias in contemporary political philosophy towards "transcendental justice". Amartya Sen rejects the institutional focus or the institutional arrangement for a society and its ideal conceptions of justice. Sen shifts the attention from identifying a perfect justice in transcendental institutionalism to the relative comparisons of justice and injustice in his 'realization-focused comparative approach'. That is, he puts forth his theory focusing on the actual realisation of justice in society by evaluating social injustices in a comparative setting. For the comparative theory of justice, the idea of justice is not about achieving a perfectly just and ideal society but about producing as just society as possible given the circumstances in a comparative setting. In this view, he follows thinkers such as Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, Mary Wollstonecraft, Karl Marx, and JS Mill, who attempted to evaluate the desirability of particular 'social realisations' rather than search for a set of perfectly just first principles. According to Sen, it may be impossible to agree on perfectly just institutions. However, using a comparative approach, we can at least arrive at a widespread and general consensus on the injustice of certain practices or outcomes relative to others.

Summarized Overview

John Rawls' liberal theory of justice ('justice as fairness') centres on the idea that a just society should be based on principles that free and rational individuals would agree upon in a hypothetical 'original position' under a 'veil of ignorance.' This veil ensures that individuals make decisions without knowing their own social status, class, or personal biases, leading to the adoption of two key principles: the equal basic liberties principle and the difference principle. The first principle emphasises that each person should have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberties. At the same time, the second allows for social and economic inequalities only if they benefit the least advantaged members of society. Rawls' approach criticises utilitarianism for its potential to justify the violation of individual rights for the greater good, instead advocating for a system that prioritises fairness and equality within a democratic framework. His work addresses the challenges of legitimacy and stability in a pluralistic society, emphasising the role of public reason in achieving consensus on fundamental political issues.

In contrast, Amartya Sen offers a critical perspective on Rawls' approach, particularly targeting the 'transcendental institutionalism' that seeks idealised models of justice. Sen argues for a more practical and comparative approach, focusing on the realities of injustice rather than the pursuit of an unattainable perfect society. His 'comparative theory of justice' emphasises the importance of addressing real-world injustices by evaluating and improving existing institutions rather than creating hypothetical models. Sen's critique extends to the broader tradition of Western political philosophy, advocating for a more pragmatic, context-sensitive approach to justice that considers global perspectives and the actual lives of people. While Rawls provides a robust framework for conceptualising justice within a liberal democracy, Sen's approach challenges us to think beyond ideal theories and focus on practical solutions that can reduce inequalities and improve human well-being.

Self-Assessment

1. Write an essay on the Roles of Political Philosophy according to John Rawls

2. What is justice as fairness? How does it help build impartiality in the approach to justice? Analyse.

3. What do we mean by the liberal theory of justice? Elaborate in detail

Assignments

1. What is Amartya Sen's criticism of metaphysical justice? How does he give an alternative to that through Comparative Justice? Explain

2. Write a critical note on political liberalism.

3. Justice is about arranging social institutions and establishments in the most just way so as to realise the values of freedom and equality for all. Explain.

Reference

1. Audard, C. (2007). *John Rawls*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

2. Brooks, T., and Nussbaum, M. (eds.) (2015). *Rawls's Political Liberalism,* New York: Columbia University Press.

3. Freeman, S., (ed.) (2003), *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

4. Sen, Amartya (1992). *Inequality Re-examined*. Harvard University Press.

5. Rawls, John (2001). *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement.* Harvard University Press.

Suggested Reading

1. Rawls, John (1996). *Political Liberalism.* Columbia University Press.

2. Rawls, John (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press.

3. Sen, Amartya. (2009). *The Idea of Justice,* Harvard University Press: Cambridge.

4. Sen, Amartya. (1999). *Development as Freedom.* Oxford University Press.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

UNIT 4
Robert Nozick: Libertarian Theory of Justice

Learning Outcomes

By the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the core principles of Libertarianism and its foundation on individualism

- understand the concept of the Minimal State and its justification within the framework of libertarian philosophy.

- explain the fundamental principles of Nozick's entitlement theory of justice and its stand on distributive justice

- analyse how the principles of entitlement theory of justice contrast with other theories of justice, particularly Rawls's justice as fairness.

Background

Robert Nozick (1938—2002) is a prominent American philosopher and one of the most influential political philosophers of the twentieth century. Alongside John Rawls, Nozick played a crucial role in the revival of analytic political philosophy. His groundbreaking work, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974), stands as a critical counterpoint to Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971), with both books regarded as the twin pillars of modern political thought in the Anglo-American tradition. Nozick's philosophy, especially his book, sparked significant discussion and debate, particularly for its defence of libertarianism and the minimal state. Nozick offers a compelling defence of free-market libertarianism, directly challenging Rawls's egalitarian liberalism. He argues against the redistributive justice theories that advocate for a more extensive state and upholds that it is the obligation of a state to improve the lot of its less advantaged by taking from the advantaged. Nozick's inventive defence of libertarianism attacked Rawls's left-leaning social-democratic liberalism or welfare state in *A Theory of Justice* (1971). Through his systematic critique of redistributive taxation and social engineering, Nozick advocates for a minimal state that protects individual rights without overstepping its bounds, thus preserving personal liberties and the sanctity of private property.

Discussion

- Nozick's Anglo-American analytic tradition

Robert Nozick (1938—2002) is an American philosopher who held a professorship at Harvard University. He is one of the most influential political philosophers, along with john Rawls, in the Anglo-American analytic tradition. Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, together with Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, is generally considered one of the two great classics of twentieth-century analytic political philosophy, which played a crucial role in the revival of the discipline of social and political philosophy within the analytic school.

While Rawls made a systematic defence of egalitarian liberalism in his book, Nozick made a compelling defence of free-market libertarianism in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. This book is a critical response to John Rawls' Theory of Justice, which was published just three years earlier and was considered to be the most robust defence of liberal egalitarianism. As a proponent of libertarianism, Nozick specifically attacked the theories of distributive justice, which envisage a 'more extensive state,' focusing especially on the powerful theory of John Rawls. Nozick's systematic criticism of Rawls' theory of justice and establishment of a rival political theory in the book brought significant attention to twentieth-century political philosophy.

- Nozick's free market liberalism versus Rawls' egalitarian liberalism

- Nozick against paternalistic state/ government

Nozick vehemently attacked various forms of paternalistic government that ''forbid capitalistic acts between consenting adults.'' He rejected the liberal orthodoxy that had created and sustained the modern welfare state. The state, according to Nozick, is fine and justified as long as it is minimal and does not coerce individuals or usurp their rights. Nozick's critique of America's social welfare system continues to define the debate between conservatives and liberals.

3.4.1 Libertarianism in Political Philosophy

Libertarianism is a political philosophy or ideology that strictly limits and restricts the role of the state in society, essentially in police protection, national defence, and the administration of courts of law. According to libertarianism, all

other tasks, such as education, social insurance, welfare, and so forth, which are commonly performed by modern governments or welfare states, are to be taken care of by religious organisations, charities, and other private institutions operating in a free market.

While both liberalism and libertarianism are political ideologies somewhat in a similar sense, liberalism holds that the role of government is to protect and promote individual rights, equality, and autonomy, and libertarianism promotes individual liberty (freedom and autonomy) as its central concern. Libertarianism minimises the purview of the government and holds that the role of government is only to protect individual liberty. Liberalism and egalitarianism emerged as a response to the social and economic challenges brought about by the Industrial Revolution. Emerging in the 19th century, liberals sought to address inequality, promote social justice and advocate for governmental action to address societal issues. In the 20th century, libertarianism evolved into a separate ideology, placing a stronger emphasis on individual liberty and advocating for the depreciation of the state's intervention in both economic and social spheres. In short, how just and fair governmental interventions vis-à-vis individuals' autonomy exist is the key matter that differentiates both ideologies.

As is known from the above, the basic unit of libertarianism as a political philosophy is individualism. Individuals are the primary units, and the state, society or culture are the products of individuals coming together. David Boaz, a follower of Robert Nozick and a contemporary proponent of 'reasonable, radical libertarianism' holds the view that "for libertarians, the basic unit of social analysis is the individual. It is hard to imagine how it could be anything else." While acknowledging the value of society to individuals, he holds the view that at the conceptual level, any society by itself does not have any independent existence. Rather, it is constituted by and composed of individuals. He also upholds the view that since society as a 'whole' does not have a separate existence, it does not have any rights as well. Rather, only individuals have. Boaz maintains that "libertarianism is the kind of individualism that is appropriate to a free society: treating adults as adults, letting them make decisions even when they make mistakes, trusting them to find the best solutions for their own lives." According to this, individuals are free and equal persons, and they have the right, not the state, to make decisions for their own lives.

The emphasis of libertarianism is on individual liberty against state interference and on limited government and free markets. It argues for minimal state intervention in personal and economic affairs, advocating for a society where individuals have the maximum liberty to pursue their own interests and use their own resources as they see fit, as long as they do not infringe upon the rights of others. This political philosophy has its roots in the belief that individuals are the best judges of their own lives and should have the autonomy to make decisions without coercion from the state.

<aside>
• Individuals are the best judges of their own
</aside>

3.4.2 The Minimal State or 'Night-Watchman State'

Nozick famously places individuals against the state. One of the most important contributions he made to political philosophy is his concept of 'night-watchman state' in the *Anarchy, State, and Utopia.* He attacks both the sovereign state and the welfare state propounded by the social contract theorists in classical political philosophy. He argues for a minimal state, the role of which is confined to protecting the rights of individuals alone. For Nozick, the state is a mere 'night-watchman' whose role is to protect individuals from theft, fraud and violence in the darkness of night.

<aside>
• Nozick for a night-watchman state and against a sovereign state or welfare state
</aside>

The only state which can be morally justified and legitimated is what Nozick calls a minimal state or 'night-watchman' state, a government which protects individuals from force, fraud, theft and violence, using police and military forces, and administers courts of law and does nothing else. Anything beyond that is a violation of people's rights. The minimal state cannot regulate or restrict what citizens eat, drink, or smoke, as that would be an interference with people's right to use their own self-owned bodies as they see right or fit. The minimal state also cannot regulate what people read, write, and publish, as that would interfere with people's right to use the property they acquired with their own self-owned labour, such as presses and papers. In this sense, various programs, schemes and policies of the modern liberal welfare state are also immoral as they make slaves of the citizens of such a state.

<aside>
• A state that goes beyond minimal functions infringes on individual rights and liberties

• The state has no power to engage in redistributive taxation or welfare programs that infringe on individual rights and liberties
</aside>

Nozick states: "The night-watchman state of classical liberal theory limited to the functions of protecting all its citizens against violence, theft, and fraud, and to the enforcement of contracts, and so on, appears to be redistributive". According to Nozick, the classical state is apparently redistributive as it

forces some people to pay for the protection of others. The state, Nozick holds, did not have any right or legitimacy to compel some people to be accountable for the protection of other people without violating the rights of the former. According to this, individuals should be free to engage in voluntary exchanges without coercive interference. The minimal state, therefore, must be confined to the functions of protecting individual rights and private property.

3.4.3 Self-Ownership and Individual Rights

Nozick revives interest in the notion of rights as being central to political theory, and he did so in the service of the political thought of libertarianism. The concepts of individual rights and minimal state in Nozick are mutually connected. Nozick puts forth the concept of a minimal state by keeping the idea of a maximal individual on the other side and assuming that individual rights and states come into conflict with each other. The primary role of the state is to protect individual rights, particularly property rights, and any state action beyond this minimal function is unjust, according to Nozick. This concept of state sharply attacks a more expansive view of the state and its responsibility, as seen in welfare states and social democracies. Nozick's work is a direct response to John Rawls' theory of justice, which advocates for a more significant role for the state in redistributing resources to achieve social justice.

Nozick draws inspiration from the fundamental moral principle propounded by Immanuel Kant in his moral philosophy, which is the concept of minimal state in political philosophy. Kant stated in his second formulation of the famous Categorical Imperative: "Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only." The Kan's idea is that a human being as a rational agent endowed with self-awareness, free will, and the possibility of formulating a plan of life, has an inherent dignity. And, this he or she cannot be properly be treated as a mere thing, or used against his will as an instrument or resource in the way an inanimate object might be.

In line with Kant's moral philosophy, Nozick describes individual human beings as self-owners. The thesis of self-ownership in political philosophy, which can be traced back to John Locke and became the foundational philosophy of modernity, is the claim that individuals have natural rights. Each individual has a natural right to life, liberty and property, even in the state of nature. Natural rights flow from natural

- We own our bodies, skills, labours and the results of our labours

- Nozick's foundation on Lockean natural rights; a legitimate state could arise without violation of the natural rights

or divine law and are governed by it. These rights, according to Lock, are pre-political and are, in effect, granted by God to every individual from birth to death. The thesis of self-ownership states that individuals own themselves, their bodies, skills, abilities and labour. As much they own their labour, they own the products of their use or exercise of their talents and labour. It is these concepts of self-ownership, self-legislation and self-governance that constitute the essence of modern democracy. Also, it is this concept of self-ownership that proclaimed slavery as illegitimate; each individual, as a self-owner, cannot be legitimately owned by anyone else. The self-ownership thus makes slavery immoral as it involves a kind of stealing of the person (enslaved person) from themself. Nozick asserts, "Individuals have rights, and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating their rights)."

From the concepts of self-ownership and natural rights to lives, liberty and the fruits of our labour, as Locke holds it and from the concept of ends-in-themselves, as Kant holds it, Nozick draws an intriguing conclusion. To own something means to have a right to it, and thus, people owning themselves means that they have a bundle of rights on themselves. Possessing a bundle of rights to something includes possessing that thing, disposing of it, determining what may be done with it, etc. This constitutes the ownership. In that line, to own oneself means to have rights to various elements that make up one's self. Nozick expands on this point and argues that these rights, in a moral sense, set limits on how others may/can treat a person. That is, as we own ourselves and thus have a right to ourselves, others are morally constrained or restrained not to kill or hurt us. Because killing or hurting us involves destroying or damaging our property.

- To own something means to have the right to possess or dispose of the same

- From the concept of self-ownership to the rejection of taxation and redistribution

Nozick's radical conclusion comes from the above discussion. From the self-ownership and the rights one has to do various things, Nozick reaches the rejection of taxation. From self-ownership, he draws the conclusion that taxation and the redistributive tasks in which modern welfare states engage in order to fund the various welfare activities are morally illegitimate. Whenever some people labour, the state takes away from them a certain amount (taxation) of their labour, that is, the amount that produces wealth. This is involuntary work or forced labour imposed by the state, which amounts to partial slavery. The taxation is a partial slavery because it gives every citizen an entitlement to certain benefits such as welfare

or social security through taxation from others amounts. Here, the state, in effect, gives them an entitlement - a right to a part of our labour, which produces the taxes that fund the benefits for them. According to Nozick, through this process, every citizen becomes a partial owner of ours as they have a partial property right in part of ours, that is, our labour. This goes against the self-ownership.

Based on the above, Nozick rejects Rawlsian Justice and its principles of redistributive taxation and social engineering aimed at achieving fairness. Nozick argues that such measures of redistributive justice violate individual rights by coercively transferring property from some individuals to others. Thus, according to Nozick, Rawl's redistributive justice and quest for equality involved the imposition of inequality. Individuals have a right to the fruits of their labour, and any forced redistribution by the state is an infringement on personal liberty. It is in this line that Nozick's vision of legitimate state power clearly contrasts with that of Rawls.

3.4.4 Nozick's Entitlement Theory of Justice

Nozick proposes the entitlement theory of justice as an alternative to the existing theories of justice. The entitlement theory primarily upholds the inviolability and sacredness of individual rights. It emphasises the moral importance of respecting private property and voluntary exchanges, thereby rejecting the extensive state and its interference in personal and economic affairs. The debate is around the individual versus the state, as already said. Liberalism believes that a more-than-minimal state is necessary for a just distribution of goods, wealth and income among members of the society (distributive justice). At the same time, libertarianism rejects the intervention of any central authority and distributive justice and upholds a minimum state.

Nozick prima facie rejects the redistribution of the liberal state. Any individual who acquired or procured what they have through legitimate means is morally entitled to it. To be entitled to something means one has been given the right to have or do something. However, he does not reject the distribution unconditionally; rather, he applies certain conditions. In the entitlement theory of justice, he states that the distribution of wealth resources (as he calls the 'holdings') in a society is just if (and only if) everyone in that society is entitled to what they have. That is, any distribution of 'holdings', no matter how

unequal they are in a society, is just if (and only if) it arises from a just distribution through legitimate means. Nozick puts forth three legitimate means or principles of just distribution that make up the basic framework of entitlement theory. Or, to say, a more adequate theory of justice, in Nozick's view, would enumerate three principles of justice in holdings. They are the principle of just acquisition, the principle of just transfer, and the principle of just rectification.

The first principle of entitlement theory of justice (or entitlement theory of distributive justice) is the principle of just acquisition. This states that individuals may/can initially acquire any property/wealth they wish just so long as it is previously unowned by anyone else and is not taken by theft, coercion or fraud. It is the initial acquisition of something that is unowned in circumstances where the acquisition would not disadvantage others. The second one is the principle of just transfer, whereby property/wealth may be exchanged just so long as the transfer is not done by theft, force or fraud. This is the voluntary transfer of ownership of holdings to someone else. These are the two principles of legitimate means of acquiring and transferring goods, and according to Nozick, all valid transactions come from repeated actions on these two principles. The third one is the principle of just rectification, by which Nozick means the works to rectify the injustice or violations of the first two principles: the acquisition or transfer of holdings. This principle is about returning the holdings to their rightful owners or compensating those who have been wronged.

Nozick's entitlement theory of justice has faced severe criticism for its lack of concern for basic needs and for social justice and distributive equality. The critics view that, with its focus on individual property rights and voluntary transactions, the entitlement theory potentially leaves behind those sections who face historical injustices, biased social structures, and systemic disadvantages based on their identities. While solely prioritizing the acquisition and transfer of property through voluntary transactions, the theory completely ignores social inequalities and allows for extreme wealth disparities. In short, this theory is viewed as not providing any safeguard to ensure everyone's access to essential needs.

Summarized Overview

Nozick's political philosophy fundamentally challenges the conventional theories of distributive justice, particularly those aligned with liberal welfare states or egalitarian liberalism as advocated by John Rawls. Nozick's minimal state or 'night-watchman' state underscores a radical individualism, where the primary unit is individuals, not society or culture, and the prime function of the state is the protection of individual rights, particularly property rights, rather than engaging in redistributive practices. Nozick's entitlement theory of justice asserts that a distribution of wealth is just if it arises from legitimate acquisition, transfer, or rectification, without any requirement for an egalitarian or patterned distribution. This sharply contrasts with Rawls's principles of justice, which emphasise a more robust role and centralised authority for the state in ensuring a fair distribution of resources.

Nozick's theory is deeply rooted in the Kantian principle of treating individuals as ends in themselves. It extends the Lockean concept of self-ownership to argue against taxation and state interference in personal economic affairs. His criticism that welfare states and redistributive taxation are forms of partial slavery indicates his commitment to maximising individual liberty and autonomy. The entitlement theory, with its emphasis on historical legitimacy rather than end-state patterns, offers a rigorous defence of free-market libertarianism and the minimal state. However, Nozick's theory also raises critical questions about the moral and practical implications of such a minimal state, particularly in terms of social justice and equality. This tension between individual rights and the demands for a just society remains a central theme in contemporary debates on political philosophy.

Self-Assessment

1. How does Nozick's concept of the minimal state differ from the welfare state proposed by John Rawls in terms of individual rights and government intervention?

2. Explain Nozick's entitlement theory of justice. How do the principles of just acquisition, just transfer, and just rectification contribute to his view of a just society?

3. In what ways does Nozick's theory of self-ownership challenge the legitimacy of redistributive taxation and social welfare programs?

4. Nozick's libertarianism draws from Kant's moral philosophy, particularly the concept of treating individuals as ends in themselves. This influences Nozick's view on state authority and individual rights. Discuss

Assignments

1. Critically evaluate Nozick's critique of Rawls's theory of justice. How does Nozick's defence of libertarianism serve as a counterpoint to Rawls's egalitarian liberalism, and what are the implications of this debate for contemporary political philosophy?

2. Analyze Nozick's concept of self-ownership and its relationship to his libertarian principles. How does this concept challenge the ethical foundations of redistributive justice and welfare states?

3. Discuss the significance of the entitlement theory of justice in Nozick's political philosophy. Compare and contrast Nozick's historical, unpatterned theory of justice with other theories that emphasise patterns or end-states, such as egalitarianism.

4. Examine the role of individual rights in Nozick's vision of a minimal state. How does Nozick reconcile the protection of individual rights with the limited functions of the state, and what challenges does this pose to broader concepts of social justice?

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.
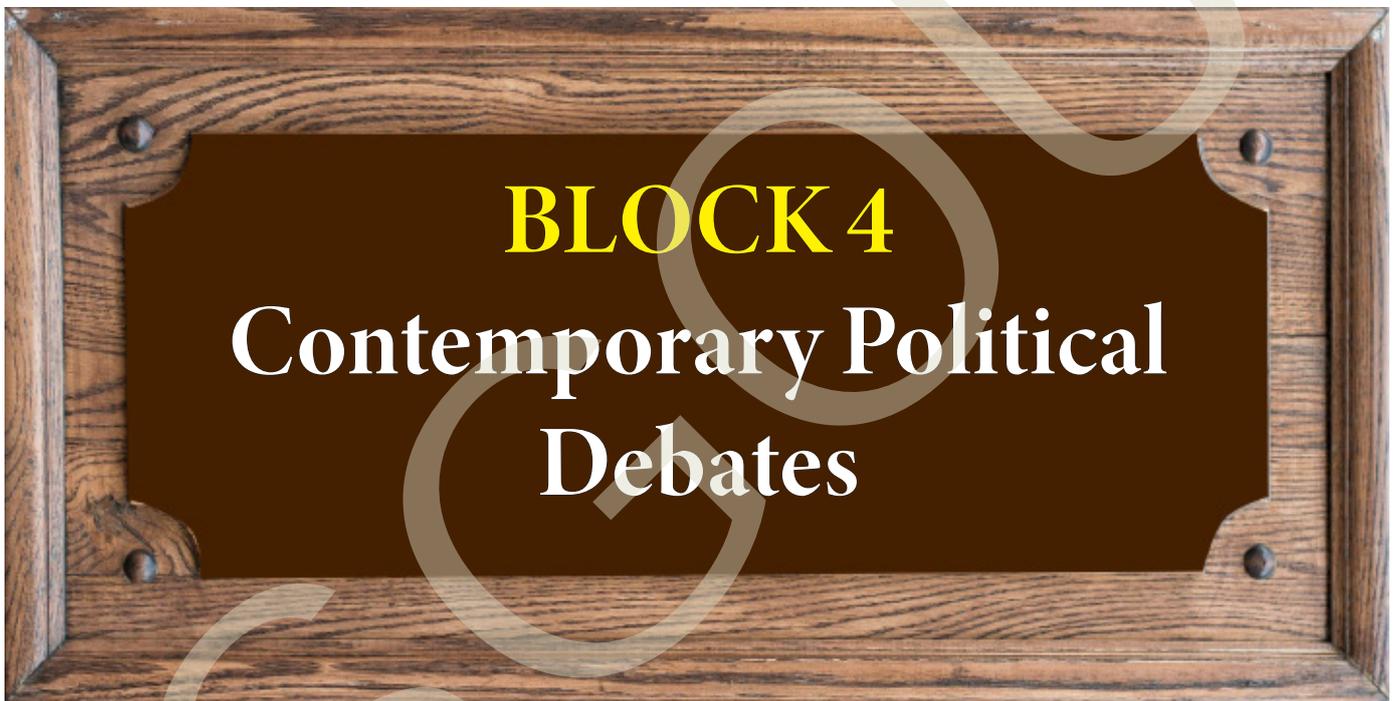
BLOCK 4
Contemporary Political Debates

UNIT 1
Totalitarianism

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand and explain the philosophical foundations of totalitarianism and how they have shaped political theory.
- compare and contrast the contributions of key thinkers to the development of the concept of totalitarianism.
- identify and outline the core themes and ideas central to totalitarian regimes.
- critically assess the philosophical arguments made against totalitarianism.
- apply philosophical insights on totalitarianism to analyse modern political contexts.

Background

Totalitarianism has been one of the most potent and troubling phenomena in modern history. The term itself evokes images of absolute control, where the state penetrates every aspect of life, eradicating individual freedoms and enforcing a rigid, unified ideology. Philosophically, totalitarianism represents a radical departure from the principles of democracy, individualism, and liberalism. It challenges the very foundations of ethical and political thought by proposing a system where the collective will, as interpreted by the ruling elite, overrides personal autonomy and moral plurality. The philosophical exploration of totalitarianism delves into the nature of power, authority, and the human condition under such regimes. Thinkers like Hannah Arendt, who famously analysed the roots of totalitarianism, describe it as a novel form of government that seeks to dominate every aspect of human life, both public and private. Arendt's work, along with that of other philosophers like Karl Popper and Michel Foucault, has provided profound insights into the mechanisms and implications of totalitarian rule. This unit will explore the philosophical underpinnings of totalitarianism, examining how it has been theorised and critiqued by various thinkers. In this unit, we will analyse the central

themes associated with totalitarianism, such as the role of ideology, the use of terror, and the concept of the totalitarian state. Additionally, the unit will address the criticisms of totalitarianism and discuss its relevance in contemporary political discourse. Through this exploration, we aim to understand the philosophical significance of totalitarianism and its implications for the human pursuit of freedom and justice.

Keywords

Authoritarianism, Surveillance, Oppression, Despotism, Ideology

Discussion

4.1.1 Totalitarianism: A Working Definition

Totalitarianism is a comprehensive and often oppressive political system in which the state exerts absolute authority over every aspect of both public and private life. This concept emerges from the Latin word *totalitas,* meaning "totality," which underscores the regime's ambition to exercise complete control and integrate its authority into every conceivable facet of society. In a totalitarian regime, the governing body not only directs political and administrative matters but also encroaches deeply into cultural, social, and personal dimensions. Unlike other forms of authoritarianism, which may limit their control to specific areas of governance or restrict political freedoms while allowing some degree of personal autonomy, totalitarianism seeks to eliminate any distinction between public and private spheres. The state's reach is total, extending into individual thoughts and behaviours, thereby aiming to reshape society according to an all-encompassing ideological vision.

- Absolute control over every facet of society and individual life

At its core, totalitarianism involves the centralisation of power in a single leader or a dominant party that establishes itself as the ultimate authority. This central authority operates with no meaningful checks and balances, often leading to a concentration of power that stifles any potential challenges or dissent. The regime employs a single, often radical ideology that dictates not only political policies but also influences societal norms, values, and personal beliefs. This ideology becomes the foundation upon which all aspects of life are constructed, enforced, and regulated.

- · Centralized power enforces a single ideology

The regime's control over society is total, meaning it penetrates into areas such as education, media, culture, and

even private life. By doing so, it seeks to create a homogeneous society where dissent is not merely discouraged but is actively eradicated. Through state-controlled media and rigorous censorship, the regime disseminates propaganda that aligns public perception with its ideological goals, thereby eliminating alternative viewpoints. The state's pervasive surveillance mechanisms ensure that any deviation from the prescribed norms is detected and dealt with harshly. This level of control extends into the very personal lives of individuals, affecting their daily routines, social interactions, and even their private thoughts and beliefs.

Totalitarianism is characterised by its aggressive and often violent suppression of political opposition. Unlike more permissive authoritarian regimes, which might allow for limited opposition or dissent, totalitarian states are marked by their systematic efforts to obliterate any form of political or ideological resistance. Political parties, civil society organisations, and independent media that challenge the regime's authority are banned or severely repressed. Leaders or activists who oppose the regime are frequently arrested, tortured, or executed, creating an atmosphere of fear that prevents the emergence of alternative political movements or ideologies. Overall, totalitarianism represents an extreme form of governance where the state seeks to control every aspect of life and suppress any opposition to its authority. This extensive reach into all areas of existence, combined with its use of ideology and surveillance, creates a deeply repressive environment where individual freedoms are severely curtailed, and dissent is ruthlessly suppressed.

4.1.2 Historical Examples of Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism has manifested in various historical contexts, each illustrating the regime's characteristic features through its specific methods and policies. Examining Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy provides insight into how these regimes implemented totalitarian control and the impact on their societies. Nazi Germany, led by Adolf Hitler from 1933 to 1945, exemplifies the extreme reach of totalitarianism. The Nazi regime's centralisation of power was facilitated by the Enabling Act of 1933, which allowed Hitler to legislate without parliamentary consent, thus consolidating his control. The Nazi Party, with its Leader Principle, placed Hitler at the apex of authority, establishing a one-party state where dissent was not tolerated. The

- Total control tends to eradicate dissent

- Totalitarianism aggressively suppresses opposition

- Hitler's regime defined extreme centralisation

Nazi ideology, rooted in Aryan supremacy and anti-Semitism, justified aggressive expansionist policies and the systematic persecution of Jews and other minorities. Hitler's consolidation of power marked the essence of Nazi totalitarianism.

The regime's control extended deeply into German society. The Nazis overhauled educational institutions to ensure that children were indoctrinated with Nazi values from a young age. Media and cultural productions were tightly controlled, with the regime censoring opposing viewpoints and promoting propaganda that glorified Hitler and the Nazi agenda. This control was enforced by the Gestapo (secret police) and the SS, who monitored the population and dealt ruthlessly with dissenters. The establishment of concentration camps for political prisoners and the persecution of Jews are stark examples of the regime's brutal repression.

- Nazi control was pervasive and all-encompassing

Fascist Italy, under Benito Mussolini from 1922 to 1943, provides another example of totalitarianism, though its methods were somewhat less extreme compared to Nazi Germany. Mussolini's regime centralised power and promoted a fascist ideology emphasising nationalism and militarism. The establishment of the National Fascist Party allowed the regime to exert control over various aspects of Italian life, including politics, education, and culture. While the regime's control was less intrusive than other totalitarian states, it still involved significant surveillance and repression through the OVRA (Organization for Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism), which monitored and suppressed political dissent. Mussolini's regime maintained power through a blend of nationalism and surveillance.

- Mussolini's regime combined nationalism with surveillance

Mussolini's propaganda emphasised the greatness of Italy and the need for a strong, authoritarian government to restore national glory. State-controlled media and public events were used to promote the image of Mussolini as the Duce (Leader) and to propagate fascist values, fostering a sense of national unity and loyalty to the regime. Mussolini's propaganda reinforced his leadership and unified the nation under his rule.

- Propaganda solidified Mussolini's authority

These historical examples illustrate how totalitarian regimes employ a combination of centralised authority, pervasive surveillance, and ideological control to dominate all aspects of society. Each regime, while unique in its methods and extent of control, demonstrates the fundamental characteristics of totalitarianism, including the suppression of dissent and the

- Totalitarianism is marked by centralised control and suppression

use of propaganda to maintain power and control.

4.1.3 Philosophical Foundations and Theories

Totalitarianism, as a political concept, is underpinned by a variety of philosophical foundations and theories. Understanding these foundations is essential for grasping the nature of totalitarian regimes and their impact on societies. This section delves into the key philosophical theories that have influenced the development of totalitarianism, including the ideas of centralised power, ideological control, and the role of the state.

4.1.3.1 Centralized Power and Authority

Centralised power is a hallmark of totalitarian regimes, which often draw on the theories of Thomas Hobbes. In his seminal work *Leviathan* (1651), Hobbes presents a compelling case for the necessity of a powerful, centralised authority to maintain societal order. Hobbes theorises that in the natural state, individuals act out of self-interest, leading to a state of perpetual conflict and insecurity. To escape this "war of all against all," he proposes the establishment of a Leviathan, a sovereign power with absolute authority to impose laws and ensure peace.

Hobbes argues that the Leviathan's authority must be unchallengeable and indivisible to effectively curb human selfishness and provide security. This notion of centralised power is central to totalitarian regimes, which adopt and amplify Hobbesian principles to justify extensive control over all aspects of life. Totalitarian states centralise power not merely to maintain order but to dominate every facet of political, social, and cultural life, leaving no room for dissent or alternative viewpoints.

In totalitarian regimes, the central authority extends its control beyond traditional governance to encompass economic policies, education, and even personal beliefs. This comprehensive centralisation ensures that the state's ideology becomes pervasive, with every institution and aspect of daily life aligned with the regime's objectives. The philosophical implications are profound, raising questions about the balance between security and freedom and the ethical limits of state power. Totalitarianism's extreme centralisation prompts a re-examination of the balance between state power and individual freedom.

- Theories underpinning totalitarianism reveal its nature

- Illustration of the necessity of centralised authority for social stability

- Totalitarian regimes push Hobbes's idea of centralisation to its extreme

- The right balance between security and individual freedom

4.1.3.2 Karl Schmitt

Karl Schmitt is often associated with the theoretical under-pinnings that can support totalitarian regimes. His work, particularly his theory of sovereignty and the concept of the "state of exception," offers a framework that can be used to justify authoritarian rule. Schmitt argued that the sovereign is the entity that decides on the state of exception, which means that in times of crisis, the sovereign has the authority to suspend normal legal and constitutional norms to maintain order and security. This concept provides a theoretical basis for the concentration of power and the suspension of democratic processes, which are characteristic of totalitarian systems.

Schmitt's critique of liberal democracy further aligns with the tenets of totalitarian thought. He viewed liberalism as weak and unable to effectively address crises due to its reliance on debate and compromise. For Schmitt, the emphasis on individual rights and democratic procedures could undermine political unity and stability. In contrast, totalitarian regimes often thrive on a strong, centralised authority that can bypass or dismantle democratic institutions during times of crisis. By advocating for a sovereign power that can act unilaterally and override legal constraints, Schmitt's theories inadvertently support the mechanisms through which totalitarian regimes consolidate and maintain control.

4.1.3.3 Ideological Control and State Power

The control of ideology is another core feature of totalitarian regimes, deeply rooted in the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. In their *Communist Manifesto* (1848), Marx and Engels argue that ideology serves as a tool for the ruling class to maintain its dominance over the proletariat. They posit that the ruling class controls not only the means of production but also the dominant ideology, which serves to legitimise and perpetuate the existing social order.

· Marx and Engels assert that ideology is a means of social control, ensuring that the values and beliefs of the ruling class become the accepted norms of society. This concept of ideological control is fundamental to understanding totalitarian regimes, where a single, all-encompassing ideology is imposed on the population. In such regimes, ideology is not merely a tool for maintaining power but becomes the foundation of all societal institutions and practices, from education to media to cultural production.

· Totalitarian regimes use ideology as a means to monopolise power and suppress dissent. The philosophical consequence of this ideological control is the suppression of alternative viewpoints and the creation of a uniform worldview. In a totalitarian state, the dominant ideology is presented as the only legitimate perspective, leaving no space for political pluralism or intellectual diversity. This not only consolidates the regime's power but also stifles individual creativity and critical thinking, reinforcing the state's total control over society.

Inverted consciousness, in Marxian theory, refers to the concept that the dominant ideas, beliefs, and perceptions in society are not an accurate reflection of reality but are instead a distorted view shaped to serve the interests of the ruling class. This distortion occurs because the ruling class controls the means of cultural production and thus propagates an ideology that justifies and perpetuates their dominance. Consequently, what people perceive as natural or self-evident truths are actually misleading representations that obscure the underlying social and economic inequalities. In essence, inverted consciousness is a form of false consciousness where the true nature of social relations and class struggle is concealed by ideologies that reinforce the status quo.

Louis Althusser, a prominent Marxist theorist, interprets ideology as a material force acting through objectively existing institutions. According to Althusser, ideology operates through "Ideological State Apparatuses" (ISAs) such as schools, churches, and media, which perpetuate and normalise the dominant class's values and interests. These institutions, while not directly part of the state apparatus, play a crucial role in maintaining the status quo by shaping individuals' consciousness and behaviour in ways that support the existing social order. Ideology, therefore, functions as a material force because it actively reinforces and reproduces social relations and power structures through these institutions, embedding itself into the very fabric of daily life and social interactions.

4.1.3.4 The Role of Propaganda and Indoctrination

Propaganda and indoctrination are central strategies in totalitarian regimes, and this thesis is highlighted by Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony. In his *Prison Notebooks* (1929-1935), Gramsci explores how the ruling class maintains its dominance through cultural and ideological

means rather than solely through political or economic power. Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony refers to the way in which the ruling class's values and beliefs become the accepted norms, effectively shaping the worldview of the entire society.

Gramsci argues that cultural hegemony is achieved through the manipulation of cultural institutions such as education, media, and religion. This manipulation ensures that the ruling class's ideology is not only dominant but also taken for granted as the natural order of things. In totalitarian regimes, this concept is magnified as the state utilises propaganda to enforce its ideology, control public discourse, and suppress dissent.

Hegemony refers to the dominance or leadership of one social class or group over others, not solely through political or economic means but by shaping and controlling cultural, ideological, and social norms. This concept emphasises how a ruling class maintains its power by securing the consent of the subordinate classes, making its values and beliefs appear as the natural or universal norm. Hegemony involves the integration of the ruling class's ideologies into various aspects of daily life, including education, media, and cultural practices, thereby ensuring that its dominance is both accepted and perpetuated without the need for constant coercion.

The use of propaganda in totalitarian regimes involves creating a controlled media environment where only state-approved narratives are disseminated. This includes rewriting history, censoring opposing viewpoints, and producing content that aligns with the regime's objectives. The philosophical implications of this strategy include the distortion of reality and the manipulation of truth, making it difficult for individuals to challenge the state's narrative or even conceive of alternative possibilities.

4.1.3.5 Suppression of Dissent and the Role of Fear

Michel Foucault's analysis of power and surveillance provides insight into the suppression of dissent in totalitarian regimes. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Foucault examines how modern states exercise control through mechanisms of surveillance, discipline, and normalisation. He argues that power is not just repressive but also productive, operating through networks of observation and regulation that shape individual behaviour and societal norms.

- The employment of propaganda to enforce ideology and suppress dissent

- ··Subtle dominance of one group's values and beliefs

- ·Distortion of reality limits the ability to challenge the state's narrative

- ··The book on surveillance and discipline reveals how totalitarian regimes control dissent

Foucault's concept of the panopticon – a hypothetical prison designed to allow all inmates to be observed by a single guard – illustrates the pervasive nature of surveillance in controlling behaviour. In totalitarian regimes, this concept is applied on a broader scale, with surveillance extending to all aspects of life. This creates a climate of fear where individuals internalise the possibility of being watched and adjust their behaviour accordingly, often resulting in self-censorship and conformity.

The role of fear in totalitarian regimes is not limited to surveillance but includes the use of punitive measures and psychological tactics to suppress dissent. The regime's control apparatus ensures that any form of opposition is swiftly and severely punished, creating an atmosphere where dissent is not only dangerous but also perceived as futile. This pervasive fear of retribution stifles political engagement and reinforces the regime's absolute authority.

4.1.3.6 Hannah Arendt on Citizenship Rights

Hannah Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) provides profound insights into the erosion of citizenship rights under totalitarian regimes. Arendt's work explores how totalitarianism fundamentally undermines the concept of citizenship by stripping individuals of their political and civil rights, thereby dehumanising them and rendering them powerless. Arendt's idea of citizenship is crucial for understanding political participation and identity. For her, citizenship is not merely a legal status but a fundamental condition for political action and identity. It involves the ability to act and speak in public, contributing to the formation of a shared political space where individuals exercise their freedoms and engage in collective decision-making.

In totalitarian regimes, Arendt observes a systematic dismantling of citizenship rights. These regimes do not merely suppress dissent but fundamentally alter the nature of political engagement. By monopolising power and eliminating political pluralism, totalitarian states eradicate the spaces where meaningful citizenship can occur. Political participation is replaced by total control, where the state's ideology permeates every aspect of life, and citizens are reduced to mere subjects under constant surveillance.

Arendt's analysis extends to the impact of the erosion of

- Fear and surveillance create a climate of conformity and control

- ·The use of punitive measures reinforces absolute control

- Citizenship enables active political participation and identity

- Dismantling of citizenship, erasing political engagement and pluralism

citizenship on individual identity and autonomy. Individuals in totalitarian regimes are deprived of their capacity to act as political beings. They are stripped of their ability to make choices, express dissent, or engage in public discourse. This loss of political agency profoundly affects personal identity, as individuals become mere objects of state control. The regime's ideology becomes the sole framework through which they must interpret their existence, leading to a profound sense of alienation and dehumanisation.

- The loss of citizenship rights leads to alienation and dehumanisation

Arendt's critique of totalitarianism emphasises the severe consequences of stripping away citizenship rights. She argues that totalitarian regimes create a totalitarian society through ideology, suppression, and surveillance. This systematic erosion of citizenship not only destroys the political community but also undermines human dignity and moral responsibility. Her work serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of protecting citizenship rights as a bulwark against totalitarian tendencies.

- This critique underscores the critical importance of safeguarding citizenship rights

4.1.4 Philosophical Critiques of Totalitarianism

a) John Stuart Mill's Defence of Individual Freedom

Critiques of totalitarianism often draw from philosophical traditions emphasising individual freedom and democratic values. John Stuart Mill's On Liberty (1859) is a foundational text in this tradition, arguing for the protection of individual liberties against the encroachments of the state. Mill's philosophy is grounded in the belief that individuals should be free to pursue their own interests and express their views without undue interference, provided that their actions do not harm others. This principle is central to Mill's argument that personal liberty is crucial for a thriving and progressive society.

- Individual freedom conflicts with the restrictive nature of totalitarian regimes

Mill's critique of state control highlights the fundamental conflict between individual liberty and authoritarian rule. Totalitarian regimes, by their nature, impose extensive restrictions on personal freedoms in order to consolidate state power. Mill argues that such control stifles personal autonomy and prevents individuals from pursuing their own paths and contributing to societal progress. In his view, the right to express dissenting opinions and make personal choices is essential for both individual development and societal advancement.

- ·Totalitarian control hinders both personal growth and societal progress

Mill also addresses the concept of "tyranny of the majority," where the preferences of the majority can override individual rights. In a totalitarian state, this tyranny is not limited to the majority but extends to the state's overarching authority, which suppresses dissenting voices and alternative viewpoints. Mill's concern is that such a regime imposes a monolithic ideology that marginalises minority perspectives and restricts the diversity of thought. His argument emphasises the need for safeguards against such domination to ensure that all individuals can freely express their beliefs and participate in societal discourse.

In advocating for a robust protection of individual liberties, Mill's work challenges the justification of totalitarian control. He argues that the state should have limited interference in personal matters and that the protection of individual freedoms is vital for a just society. By emphasising the importance of personal autonomy and free expression, Mill provides a compelling counter-argument to the totalitarian impulse to centralise power and control every aspect of life. His philosophy underscores the necessity of democratic values and individual rights in resisting the oppressive nature of totalitarian regimes.

b) Karl Popper's Open Society

Karl Popper's critique of totalitarianism is central to his defence of an "open society," as outlined in his influential work *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945). Popper's philosophy is grounded in the belief that a truly democratic and free society must be open to criticism, debate, and change. This openness is essential for fostering progress and safeguarding individual freedoms against the encroachment of authoritarian control. Popper contrasts open societies with "closed societies," which are characterised by rigid ideologies and intolerance for dissent. In a closed society, the ruling powers impose a fixed set of beliefs and resist any challenge to their authority. Totalitarian regimes epitomise this closed society model, as they enforce a singular ideological framework that permeates all aspects of life, including politics, culture, and personal beliefs. This enforcement stifles intellectual diversity and prevents the emergence of alternative viewpoints, thereby undermining the very foundation of democratic governance.

Central to Popper's critique is the idea that an open society thrives on the ability to question and critique its own

institutions and ideologies. He argues that without the freedom to challenge existing norms and authorities, societies stagnate and become vulnerable to tyranny. Totalitarian regimes, with their emphasis on ideological conformity and suppression of dissent, inhibit this critical discourse. By silencing opposition and censoring alternative perspectives, such regimes create an environment where ideas cannot be tested or debated, leading to a deterioration of intellectual and social dynamism.

Popper also emphasises the role of fallibilism in an open society—the notion that no belief or ideology is infallible and that all ideas should be subject to scrutiny and revision. In contrast, totalitarian states often promote a doctrine of absolute truth, where the regime's ideology is presented as the sole legitimate perspective. This absolutism not only restricts freedom of thought but also discourages intellectual innovation and adaptability. Popper's critique highlights the detrimental impact of such ideological rigidity on societal progress and individual freedom.

Popper's defence of an open society offers a robust critique of totalitarianism by underscoring the necessity of critical debate, intellectual diversity, and the capacity for societal change. His philosophy advocates for a political environment where ideas can be freely examined, and individuals have the freedom to challenge and reform institutions, contrasting sharply with the closed, oppressive nature of totalitarian regimes.

c) Jean-Paul Sartre's Existential Freedom

Jean-Paul Sartre's existential philosophy, particularly artic-ulated in *Being and Nothingness* (1943), provides a critical lens to examine totalitarianism. Sartre's existentialism centres on the concept of radical freedom, which he argues is an inher-ent aspect of human existence. According to Sartre, individuals are fundamentally free to define their own essence and values in an indifferent and meaningless universe. This freedom is not merely the ability to make choices but a profound responsibil-ity to create meaning and identity through one's actions and decisions.

Sartre's philosophy posits that human beings are "condemned to be free," meaning that freedom is an inescapable part of human existence. This radical freedom entails the

necessity of making choices and taking responsibility for those choices without recourse to any preordained essence or external authority. Sartre argues that this freedom is both empowering and burdensome, as individuals must confront the anxiety and responsibility that come with the absence of predetermined meaning or purpose.

Totalitarian regimes, with their imposition of a singular, overarching ideology, directly contradict Sartre's notion of existential freedom. By enforcing a uniform set of beliefs and values, these regimes undermine the individual's capacity to create personal meaning and make authentic choices. In a totalitarian state, the regime's ideology permeates all aspects of life, from politics to culture to personal beliefs, leaving no room for individual autonomy or dissent. This ideological imposition not only restricts freedom of thought but also diminishes the individual's ability to engage in self-creation and self-definition.

Sartre's critique highlights the conflict between totalitarian control and existential freedom. The totalitarian state's suppression of dissent and enforcement of ideological conformity stifles individual creativity and self-expression. For Sartre, true freedom involves the ability to question, to choose, and to live authentically according to one's own values. Totalitarianism, by constraining this freedom and imposing a monolithic worldview, effectively nullifies the existential foundation of human existence. The regime's control over personal beliefs and actions prevents individuals from achieving authentic selfhood and living in accordance with their true selves.

d) George Orwell

George Orwell's novel *1984* is one of the most famous literary critiques of totalitarianism. Set in a dystopian future, the novel depicts a society under the grip of an authoritarian regime where surveillance, propaganda, and control of information are used to maintain absolute power. Orwell introduces the concept of "Big Brother," a symbol of the state's omnipresent surveillance, where citizens are constantly watched and manipulated through fear. The regime erases historical truths, rewrites reality, and limits freedom of thought, illustrating the terrifying consequences of unchecked power.

Orwell's work critiques the mechanisms that totalitarian

- · Existential freedom brings responsibility

- • The suppression of individual autonomy

- · Theegation of the possibility of authentic selfhood

- · Grip of surveillance and manipulation under totalitarianism

governments use to sustain control. His portrayal of Newspeak, a language designed to eliminate dissenting thoughts, reflects his concern about the manipulation of language as a tool of repression. By simplifying vocabulary and eliminating words associated with rebellion, the regime prevents citizens from even conceptualising dissent. Moreover, slogans like "War is Peace" and "Freedom is Slavery" exemplify how language is twisted to mask contradictions and create propaganda, making it difficult for individuals to discern reality from state-imposed fiction. Orwell's warnings in *1984* about the dangers of propaganda, surveillance, and state control resonate with real-world totalitarian systems, where truth becomes subservient to power.

- Language as a tool of repression and manipulation of truth

e) Frankfurt School

The Frankfurt School, particularly thinkers like Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, critiqued totalitarianism through their analysis of Enlightenment ideals and modern capitalist societies. In their seminal work Dialectic of Enlightenment, they argued that the rationality and progress promised by the Enlightenment had, paradoxically, given rise to forms of domination and control, including fascism and totalitarianism. They believed that the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason, when taken to its extreme, led to a cold, instrumental rationality that prioritises efficiency and control over human freedom, making societies more susceptible to authoritarian rule. For them, totalitarianism was not only a political phenomenon but a cultural one, in which mass culture and ideology were manipulated by authoritarian systems to suppress critical thinking. By controlling culture, totalitarian regimes shape collective consciousness, making people passive and obedient to authority.

- Failure of Enlightenment rationality

Adorno and Horkheimer linked the rise of totalitarianism to the culture industry, which they believed commodified art and culture, making it easier for authoritarian regimes to use these tools for propaganda and mass control. They argued that the culture industry, by producing entertainment and media as commodities, reduces cultural products to mere tools for economic gain and social manipulation. This commodification of culture allows authoritarian regimes to manipulate societal values and norms, reinforcing conformity and passivity among the populace. Through controlled cultural production, totalitarian regimes create a uniform cultural environment

- ·Mass culture enables totalitarian control through manipulation and conformity.

where dissenting voices are marginalised and critical thinking is stifled. By shaping public consciousness and suppressing alternative viewpoints, totalitarian systems maintain their dominance and prevent the emergence of resistance.

Summarized Overview

Totalitarianism epitomises an extreme form of political control where the state seeks to permeate every aspect of individual and societal life, eliminating any form of dissent or alternative thought. Philosophically, it extends the concepts of sovereign authority and ideological dominance to their most invasive and totalising extremes. John Stuart Mill's arguments highlight the dangers of unchecked state power, stressing the importance of individual freedom and the tyranny of the majority, which can be exacerbated in totalitarian regimes. Hannah Arendt's insights into totalitarianism underscore how such regimes create a false sense of unity and purpose while isolating individuals from one another, thus eroding genuine political participation and communal bonds. Karl Popper's critique emphasises the dangers of closed societies and the tendency of totalitarian regimes to suppress critical thinking and scientific inquiry, thereby stifling intellectual and social progress. Central to understanding totalitarianism is the idea of the state as an omnipotent entity, a concept deeply rooted in Hobbes's notion of the Leviathan. This all-powerful sovereign, while intended to maintain order, becomes a tool for absolute control, transforming political power into a pervasive force that extends into every corner of human existence. The theoretical contributions of Marx and Engels provide insight into how totalitarian regimes craft a monolithic ideology to justify their control, turning ideology into an instrument of oppression.

Althusser's interpretation of ideology as a material force further illustrates how totalitarian states use institutions to embed their dominance into everyday life. Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony demonstrates how totalitarian regimes achieve ideological control by permeating all aspects of culture, making dissent almost inconceivable. Additionally, Foucault's analysis of surveillance and disciplinary mechanisms offers a contemporary understanding of how totalitarian regimes employ systematic surveillance to control and normalise behaviour, integrating the state's will into the very fabric of daily life. Through this philosophical lens, totalitarianism is revealed not merely as a form of governance but as a profound challenge to individual autonomy and pluralism, where the state's ideology and surveillance penetrate so deeply that personal freedom becomes an illusion.

Self-Assessment

1. How does John Stuart Mill's notion of liberty critique the principles of totalitarianism?

2. In what ways does Hannah Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism highlight the erosion of political participation?

3. How does Karl Popper's concept of the open society relate to the suppression of critical thought in totalitarian regimes?

Assignments

1. Discuss Hobbes's idea of the Leviathan in the context of totalitarian control.

2. Explain Marx and Engels's view of ideology in the establishment and maintenance of totalitarian regimes.

3. How does Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony apply to the cultural dominance observed in totalitarian states?

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UNIT 2

Freedom

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- differentiate between Berlin's concepts of negative and positive liberty.

- explain how negative and positive liberty affect individual autonomy and societal structure.

- analyze real-world examples to demonstrate the application of negative and positive liberty concepts.

- evaluate Taylor's critique of Berlin's theories and their implications for understanding freedom.

- develop a balanced framework for assessing freedom that incorporates both negative and positive liberty perspectives.

Background

'Freedom' is an incredibly potent word. Every one of us reacts positively to it, and it has been the basis for many revolutions, conflicts, and political campaigns. But precisely what do we mean when we talk about freedom? The fact that politicians of all parties, which follow contrary ideologies, claim to believe in freedom suggests that people don't always have the same thing in mind when they talk about it. Does freedom come in various forms, and if so, might these different types clash with one another? Would the expansion of one form of freedom entail the restriction of another? Could people even be coerced in the name of freedom? Berlin answered all of these questions in the affirmative. *Two Concepts of Liberty*, a major written piece by Isaiah Berlin that was first presented as a lecture in 1958, addresses such important questions regarding the nature of freedom and its consequences for political theory. The ideological conflict between authoritarian governments and democracy in the West was discussed in Berlin's work. The historic Cold War was in effect at the time of this clash.

Berlin makes a distinction between positive liberty, which has to do with reaching one's potential, and negative liberty, which has to do with the absence of outside

constraints. This dichotomy exposes the practical effects that various political ideologies have on human freedom and highlights the existence of these ideologies. The debate on liberty originated in the political philosophy of the 19th century. The concept of negative liberty has its roots in the natural rights theory of John Locke. According to Locke's theory, people have inalienable rights that should be shielded from outside interference. Locke's definition of liberty, which is defined as the lack of restrictions, highlights how crucial it is to protect personal freedom from arbitrary rule. John Stuart Mill elaborated on the concept, contending that the maintenance of personal freedom was essential to the advancement of both individuals and society. Mill's defence of the right to free speech and the right to self-determination emphasises how crucial human autonomy is to the development of a vibrant and progressive society. Mill's emphasis on individuality is a reflection of his conviction that human liberty has inherent worth and may promote diversity in society. Berlin's essay presents a more nuanced concept of liberty, providing a critical study of these common viewpoints. His point of view takes into account both the need for favourable circumstances in order to realise one's full potential as well as the lack of roadblocks. His argument continues to have an impact on discussions about the best balance to strike between preserving individual rights and reducing social injustices. Getting acquainted with such a framework is important in order to analyse the various forms of freedom that lead to an equitable and just society. However, Berlin's views are not devoid of criticism. Charles Taylor offered a notable critique of his view regarding freedom. This unit mainly deals with the Berlin-Taylor debate in political theory.

Keywords

Freedom, Negative Liberty, Positive Liberty, Communitarianism, Liberalism

Discussion

4.2.1 Negative Liberty

- Negative liberty protects individuals from external constraints and coercion

The concept of negative liberty emphasises independence from external interference and restraints. Its primary objective is to safeguard individuals from being subjected to coercion by outside parties, including the state. This type of liberty is essential in democratic societies, which are characterised by the protection of individual rights such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion against intrusions from external forces.

Take into consideration a person who is interested in expressing their opinions on a political matter. This individual is able to freely express their viewpoints in public without the worry of being censored or repressed in a culture that embraces

the concept of negative liberty. Individuals are able to act in accordance with their own views and preferences, provided that they do not violate the rights of other people, since this protection guarantees that personal autonomy is maintained and that individuals abide by their own preferences.

The contributions made by John Locke are essential to comprehending the concept of negative liberty. The core tenet of Locke's theory is that every individual possesses inherent rights that must be safeguarded against infringement. His idea of the social compact emphasizes the fact that the government exists to protect these rights, which is consistent with the notions of negative liberty. Locke's framework guarantees that one's freedom is protected from interference from arbitrary sources, which is a crucial component of preserving individual autonomy.

The idea of harm, which John Stuart Mill developed, provided further elaboration on the concept of negative liberty. As long as their activities do not cause harm to other people, Mill believed that people should be allowed the freedom to pursue their own paths and express their beliefs. With this principle, the need to maintain individual freedom is emphasised. At the same time, the necessity of preventing behaviours that could potentially have a negative impact on other people is acknowledged.

The criticism that Berlin offers of negative liberty draws attention to the limitations of this concept in terms of addressing the real conditions that are required for effective freedom. However, negative liberty does not take into account economic or social issues that may hamper an individual's ability to fully enjoy their rights, despite the fact that it enables individuals to be protected from external restraints. Particularly, those who are experiencing economic hardship may have difficulty gaining access to the resources that are necessary for meaningful participation in elections, despite the fact that legal protections may guarantee the right to participate in the electoral process.

Within the realm of digital liberties, one might observe a concrete illustration of this constraint. Although negative liberty ensures that individuals have the right to express themselves freely online, the ability of certain persons to participate fully in digital discourse may be hindered by factors such as digital divides and unequal access to technology. This

example demonstrates how, despite the fact that negative liberty is necessary, it must be supplemented by measures to rectify structural inequities that affect the efficient exercise of freedom.

4.2.2 Positive Liberty

The capacity to realise one's potential and accomplish personal development is the primary focus of positive liberty. Unlike negative freedom, which is concerned with the absence of constraints, positive liberty entails the establishment of enabling conditions which allow individuals to pursue their aims and aspirations. This concept emphasises the significance of supplying the resources and opportunities that are essential for self-realisation.

Imagine living in a society that provides all of its citizens with extensive social services, such as free education, universal healthcare, and assistance for underprivileged categories. It is possible to experience positive liberty in such a society because individuals are provided with the resources necessary to pursue their interests and attain personal fulfilment. Individuals, for instance, are able to cultivate their abilities and pursue occupations that are congruent with their objectives when they have access to great education. In addition to merely being protected from interference, this type of liberty encompasses the establishment of conditions that are conducive to the development of the individual himself.

The idea of the "general will" that was developed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau demonstrates a grasp of something that is referred to as positive liberty. According to Rousseau, genuine liberty is achieved when an individual is regulated by laws that they have had some involvement in making. This brings individual liberties into harmony with the interests of the community as a whole during the process of bringing about genuine liberty. This highlights the significance of participatory governance and the alignment of individual and communal objectives.

The idea that autonomy is rational self-legislation, as proposed by Immanuel Kant, is also compatible with the concept of positive liberty. The ability to act in accordance with one's rational will is an essential component of Kantian autonomy, which emphasises the importance of situations that encourage self-determined and informed decision-making.

- ·Creation of conditions that enable personal development

- Comprehensive social services enhance personal fulfilment

- General Will aligns individual freedom with collective goals

- Autonomy requires conditions that support informed choices

The importance that Kant places on autonomy highlights the necessity of enabling conditions that make it possible for individuals to exercise their freedom on their own terms meaningfully.

In his critique of positive liberty, Berlin addresses the potential dangers associated with it. When positive liberty is understood to mean the imposition of a certain conception of what constitutes a happy existence, it can be used to justify authoritarian actions that restrict the rights of individuals. Historical examples of totalitarian regimes that enforced ideological conformity under the appearance of communal freedom are examples that demonstrate the hazards that are associated with this phenomenon. These kinds of regimes frequently placed a distinct vision of societal well-being ahead of individual autonomy, which resulted in restrictive laws and repression.

- Positive liberty can justify authoritarianism if it imposes a specific vision of life.

In practical terms, positive liberty can be illustrated by social policies that aim to reduce inequality and enhance opportunities. For example, a government that invests in public education and provides social welfare programs helps individuals achieve their personal goals and contribute to a more equitable society. However, implementing such policies requires careful consideration to avoid imposing a particular vision of the good life that might restrict individual freedoms.

- The requirement of the cautious implementation of social policies

4.2.3 Balancing Negative and Positive Liberty

In order to achieve a balance between negative and positive liberty, it is necessary to incorporate the protection of individual rights with a variety of conditions that are favourable to their realisation. The lack of interference and the presence of resources and opportunities that enable individuals to completely realise their potential are both aspects of freedom that need to be taken into consideration in order to have a sophisticated understanding of freedom.

- Balancing liberty involves integrating rights protection with enabling conditions

Consider a political system that upholds legal protections for individual rights, such as freedom of speech and assembly, while also investing in social programs to address economic disparities. This balanced strategy ensures that personal autonomy is respected while simultaneously establishing conditions that make it possible for individuals to pursue their goals and contribute to the advancement of society with their efforts. Recognising that freedom is not only about shielding

- A balanced approach respects autonomy and supports personal development

individuals from external limitations but also about cultivating an environment in which individuals can meaningfully enjoy their liberties is necessary in order to strike a balance between these components of freedom.

Implementing this balance requires developing policies that support both individual autonomy and personal development. As an example, an integrated approach to liberty might consist of a framework that guarantees legal safeguards for free speech, in addition to social programs that give access to education and healthcare. A society in which freedom is both protected from external limitations and permitted by enabling conditions that empower individuals to act on their desires is one that can be created with the support of such policies when they are implemented.

Berlin's view continues to be an essential resource for developing a grasp of the intricacies of freedom in political thought. It offers vital insights into the dynamic relationship between various types of freedom despite the fact that critics say that the division between negative and positive liberty is overly basic. The analysis that he provided illustrates how important it is to consider and modify the view of liberty in order to solve the political and social difficulties that are prevalent in today's society.

Isaiah Berlin's exploration of liberty, through his distinction between negative and positive liberty, offers a profound framework for understanding the complexities of freedom. Berlin's analysis provides critical insights into how different political ideologies and practices approach liberty. Negative liberty, emphasising freedom from external interference, is essential for protecting individual autonomy and preventing coercion. However, this form of liberty alone is insufficient for addressing the practical conditions necessary for individuals to exercise their freedom fully. Positive liberty, which focuses on the capacity for self-realisation and the provision of enabling conditions, offers a more comprehensive view of freedom. It acknowledges the importance of access to resources and opportunities for achieving personal goals and contributing to societal progress.

Despite its advantages, positive liberty carries the risk of justifying coercive measures if interpreted as imposing a singular vision of the good life. Berlin's framework remains

- ·Integrated policies exemplify a balanced approach to liberty.

- ·Berlin's insights are key to evolving our understanding of freedom

- Freedom needs both the absence of interference and enabling conditions

relevant in contemporary political discourse, providing valuable insights into how to balance negative and positive liberty in practice. By reflecting on and integrating both forms of liberty, we can navigate the complexities of modern political thought and address challenges related to individual rights and social justice. Berlin's work continues to inform discussions on freedom, offering a critical perspective on how to achieve a balance between protecting personal autonomy and fostering the conditions necessary for meaningful self-realisation. In summary, the interplay between negative and positive liberty highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of freedom that encompasses both the protection from external constraints and the provision of enabling conditions.

Isaiah Berlin does not wholly support positive liberty in the same way he promotes negative liberty. Berlin is critical of positive liberty, particularly in its more authoritarian forms. He argues that positive liberty, as the freedom to achieve self-realisation or the pursuit of one's own conception of the good life, can be used to justify intrusive or coercive measures. For instance, if a government or other authority claims to know what is best for individuals and imposes certain conditions to help them achieve their true freedom, it risks infringing on individuals' negative liberty, that is, the freedom from interference. Berlin strongly supports negative liberty, which he sees as fundamental to personal freedom. Negative liberty is concerned with the absence of external constraints and interference, and Berlin believes it provides a clearer and more manageable framework for protecting individual freedom. He argues that protection from external interference is essential for safeguarding personal autonomy and preventing oppression.

While Berlin acknowledges the importance of positive liberty in discussions of human development and self-realisation, he remains wary of its potential for abuse. He recognises that positive liberty can offer valuable insights into human well-being. Still, he stresses that it should not be conflated with the absence of interference, which he views as the core of true freedom. In summary, Berlin does not reject positive liberty entirely but is cautious about its application. He supports the concept of negative liberty more strongly and warns against the potential dangers of positive liberty when it is used to justify coercive or authoritarian measures. His work emphasises the need to balance these concepts and be vigilant about the risks associated with each.

4.2.4 Taylor's Core Critique: Negative Liberty Against Positive Liberty

Charles Taylor's critique of Isaiah Berlin's concept of liberty revolves around a fundamental distinction between two types of freedom: negative and positive liberty. Berlin's formulation of negative liberty, which has been highly influential in liberal political theory, is centred on the idea that freedom is essentially about non-interference. In this view, an individual is free to the extent that they are not subject to the will or interference of others. For example, a person is considered free if they are allowed to act without being coerced or restricted by external forces, such as the state or other individuals.

However, Taylor argues that this narrow focus on non-interference is inadequate for capturing the full scope of what it means to be truly free. He contends that freedom should not only be understood as the absence of external constraints but also as the presence of conditions that enable individuals to exercise their autonomy in a meaningful way. According to Taylor, the mere absence of interference does not guarantee that a person can pursue their true goals or develop their full potential. Thus, he introduces the concept of positive liberty, which emphasises the importance of having the actual capacity to make choices that align with one's true self and higher aspirations.

4.2.4.1 The Insufficiency of Non-Interference

Taylor challenges the assumption that freedom can be fully realised through non-interference alone. He points out that even in situations where individuals are free from external constraints, they may still face significant internal barriers that hinder their ability to act freely. These internal barriers can take various forms, including psychological limitations, social pressures, economic hardships, and cultural expectations. For example, a person might be legally free to pursue an education, but if they lack the necessary resources, confidence, or support system, their ability to do so is severely limited. In this sense, freedom is not just about the absence of obstacles but also about the presence of enabling conditions that allow individuals to pursue their genuine interests and aspirations.

Taylor's critique highlights the importance of recognising that true freedom involves more than just removing external constraints. It also requires addressing the internal factors

- Freedom in Berlin's view is primarily about non-interference

- Taylor proposes a more comprehensive understanding of freedom

- True freedom requires more than just the absence of external constraints

that can prevent individuals from realising their full potential. This broader understanding of freedom challenges the liberal focus on negative liberty. It suggests that a more substantive approach is needed—one that takes into account the social and psychological dimensions of human freedom.

4.2.4.2 Positive Liberty and Self-Realization

In contrast to the minimalist notion of negative liberty, which is content with ensuring non-interference, Taylor's concept of positive liberty is concerned with the actualisation of human potential and self-realisation. Positive liberty is about having the real capacity to make meaningful choices and to lead a life that reflects one's true values and aspirations. It is not enough for individuals to be left alone; they must also have the resources, education, and social support necessary to make choices that are truly their own.

Taylor's emphasis on self-realisation aligns with a more holistic view of human nature, where freedom is understood as the ability to pursue goals that are deeply connected to one's identity and sense of purpose. For instance, a person who is free in a positive mind is not just free from external constraints but is also empowered to engage in activities that fulfil their deeper needs and aspirations. This might involve pursuing a fulfilling career, engaging in creative expression, or participating in meaningful social and political activities. Positive liberty, therefore, requires not just the absence of interference but the presence of enabling conditions that support human flourishing.

4.2.4.3 Role of the State

Taylor's critique of negative liberty also extends to the role of the state in promoting freedom. While Berlin and other liberal theorists often view the state with suspicion, arguing that its interference is inherently a threat to individual liberty, Taylor takes a more nuanced approach. He argues that the state can and should play a constructive role in enhancing freedom, particularly by addressing the internal and social barriers that impede individuals from realising their full potential.

For Taylor, the state's role is not just to prevent interference but also to create conditions that enable individuals to exercise their positive liberty. This might involve providing education, healthcare, and social services, as well as promoting

- Freedom must consider both external and internal conditions

- Positive liberty focuses on the capacity to pursue meaningful choices

- True freedom aligns with self-realisation and human flourishing

- The state has a role in promoting positive liberty

economic equality and social justice. By doing so, the state helps to remove not only external obstacles but also internal barriers—such as poverty, lack of opportunity, and social exclusion—that can prevent individuals from leading truly free and fulfilling lives. Taylor's view of the state aligns with a communitarian perspective, which emphasises the importance of social institutions and collective responsibility in supporting individual freedom.

- The state should ensure conditions for individuals to flourish.

4.2.4.4 Taylor's Philosophical Reflection on Freedom

Taylor's critique is deeply rooted in a philosophical reflection on the nature of freedom and its relationship to human flourishing. He suggests that freedom cannot be understood merely as the ability to make choices without interference; it must also involve the capacity to choose well and to pursue goals that are genuinely meaningful and fulfilling. This involves a normative dimension, where not all choices are equally valuable, and some are more conducive to human flourishing than others.

- Freedom must involve the capacity to pursue meaningful and fulfilling goals

For Taylor, true freedom is not just about the ability to do as one pleases but about the ability to lead a life that is in accordance with one's higher purposes and values. This perspective challenges the liberal emphasis on individual choice and autonomy, suggesting that freedom is also about making choices that are aligned with a deeper sense of self and the common good. Taylor's philosophical reflection thus invites us to reconsider the meaning of freedom and to recognise the importance of positive liberty in achieving a truly free and meaningful life.

- True freedom aligns with higher purposes and the common good

Summarized Overview

Taylor's response to Berlin highlights the limitations of a purely negative conception of liberty and advocates for a more comprehensive understanding that includes positive liberty. He emphasises that true freedom involves not just the absence of external constraints but also the presence of conditions that allow individuals to develop their capacities and achieve self-realisation. This perspective challenges the liberal tradition's emphasis on non-interference and opens the door to a more nuanced and socially engaged understanding of freedom. Taylor's critique underscores the importance of considering both the external and internal factors that influence human freedom and the role of the state in creating the conditions necessary for individuals to flourish. By expanding the concept of liberty to include positive dimensions, Taylor offers a more holistic and substantive approach to understanding and promoting human freedom.

Self-Assessment

1. Define negative liberty as described by Isaiah Berlin. How does it differ from positive liberty?

2. Discuss John Locke's contribution to the concept of negative liberty. How does Locke's idea of natural rights align with Berlin's notion of negative liberty?

3. Explain how John Stuart Mill's principle of Harm supports the concept of negative liberty. Provide a suitable example to illustrate this principle.

Assignments

1. What are the limitations of negative liberty, according to Berlin, and how do economic or social factors impact this concept?

2. Compare and contrast. How can a balanced approach incorporate both the concepts of positive liberty and negative liberty to address issues of individual autonomy and social justice?

3. Evaluate Charles Taylor's critique of Isaiah Berlin's distinction between negative and positive liberty.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

UNIT 3
Inclusion and Exclusion

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- describe and explain the key concepts and historical background of multiculturalism and communitarianism.
- examine and evaluate philosophical perspectives to determine how they shape the impact of multicultural policies in different political and cultural settings.
- critically analyse the strengths and weaknesses of multicultural policies in enhancing inclusion and reducing exclusion.
- compare and contrast the viewpoints of major thinkers on multiculturalism and communitarianism.
- develop and propose innovative approaches to harmonise cultural recognition with universal justice principles

Background

Multiculturalism serves as a framework designed to manage and embrace cultural diversity within a society, advocating for the recognition and accommodation of various cultural groups. In an era marked by rapid globalisation and increased migration, the relevance of multiculturalism has grown significantly. The interactions among diverse cultures within a single political entity necessitate an approach that not only acknowledges but also actively supports the coexistence of varied groups of people. This approach involves implementing policies that aim to protect minority cultures, thereby fostering an environment where different cultural identities can flourish. Such policies encourage minority groups to engage actively in the public sphere, contributing to a richer, more diverse social fabric. Conversely, communitarianism offers a critique of the liberal emphasis on individual rights and autonomy by highlighting the pivotal role of community in shaping personal identity. Unlike liberalism, which tends to focus on individuals as isolated agents with inherent rights, communitarianism asserts that individuals

are deeply influenced by their social, cultural, and communal contexts. This perspective underscores that personal identity is not merely an individual construct but is significantly shaped by one's interactions within a community. Philosophers such as Charles Taylor and Michael Sandel contribute to this discussion by arguing that a comprehensive understanding of human nature requires an acknowledgement of the communal dimensions of identity formation. Charles Taylor's philosophy, for instance, emphasises the "socially embedded self," suggesting that individual identities are deeply intertwined with communal narratives and cultural practices. Michael Sandel's critique of John Rawls' theory of justice similarly challenges the notion of the isolated, autonomous individual by stressing the importance of communal and cultural contexts in shaping personal identity and moral reasoning. This unit will delve into these philosophical perspectives, examining how they inform and influence contemporary debates on multiculturalism. A key focus will be on the issues of inclusion and exclusion, exploring how both multicultural and communitarian viewpoints frame these debates. By understanding these perspectives, we gain insights into the complexities involved in negotiating cultural diversity and fostering an inclusive society.

Keywords

Republic, Dialectic, Justice, Society, Polity, multiculturalism

Discussion

4.3.1 Communitarian View of Human Nature

- Identity is shaped by community

The communitarian view of human nature presents a fundamental critique of liberal individualism by emphasising the intrinsic connection between individuals and their communities. Unlike liberalism, which often portrays individuals as autonomous entities with rights and interests that exist independently of their social contexts, communitarianism argues that personal identity and moral values are deeply rooted in communal and cultural settings. This perspective asserts that human beings are fundamentally shaped by their social relationships and cultural environments. Thus, our understanding of human nature cannot be divorced from these communal influences.

Communitarianism draws from various philosophical traditions. In essence, it critiques the liberal focus on individual rights and autonomy by underscoring the importance of communal bonds and cultural contexts. It argues that a comprehensive understanding of human nature requires acknowledging the ways in which our identities and values

- Balancing individual rights and community values

- Personal growth thrives through active communal engagement

- Community involvement nurtures individual identity and ethical growth

- The importance of incorporating social and cultural contexts into our concept of justice

are shaped by our relationships and interactions within our communities. This perspective not only critiques liberal individualism but also offers insights into how communities can be better understood and managed in ways that respect and enhance the complex interplay between individuals and their social environments. The following are some of the key philosophical frameworks of communitarianism.

Aristotle's concept of humans as "political animals" underscores the belief that personal development is profoundly intertwined with communal life. According to Aristotle, our ethical and personal growth occurs within the framework of a political community, suggesting that personal identities are cultivated through active participation in communal activities. In a close-knit village, individuals typically engage in community-oriented roles, such as participating in local governance and communal events. This involvement reflects Aristotle's idea that community participation is crucial for personal and ethical development.

Aristotle posits that humans achieve their fullest potential not in isolation but through their contributions to and interactions with their community. For instance, by participating in civic duties and communal rituals, individuals not only help shape the moral and social fabric of their society but also find a sense of purpose and belonging. This dynamic interaction between the individual and the community underscores Aristotle's belief that personal identity and ethical development are inherently communal, further illustrating the interdependence between individuals and their social environments. As individuals take on roles that align with communal values and norms, they help reinforce the shared identity of their community while simultaneously developing their own sense of self.

Michael Sandel's critique of John Rawls in *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* challenges the fundamental assumptions of Rawls' theory of justice. Rawls argues that justice should be based on a hypothetical social contract where individuals are abstracted from their social contexts, envisioning them as neutral agents making decisions from an original position of equality. Sandel, however, contends that this abstraction fails to account for the deep influence of communal and cultural backgrounds on individual identities. He asserts that such a theoretical approach ignores how our identities are intricately shaped by the communities and traditions to which we belong.

The essence of one's selfhood is often rooted in these communal ties, which are essential for understanding the broader context of justice.

In particular, Sandel illustrates how the liberal ideal of self-determination can overlook the importance of familial and communal roles. In many societies, these roles are not merely incidental but fundamental to personal identity and ethical development. For instance, in cultures where family and community expectations play a central role in defining individual choices, the liberal perspective's focus on personal autonomy may lead to a disconnect between individual decisions and communal values. This disjunction can undermine the ability to fully grasp how justice should be applied in a way that respects both personal freedom and communal bonds.

Charles Taylor's notion of the "socially embedded self" posits that individual identities are constructed through interactions within social contexts. Taylor argues that personal identity is not merely an isolated construct but is deeply influenced by communal narratives and cultural practices. For instance, the celebration of cultural heritage through festivals and rituals in various societies reflects Taylor's perspective. These practices are integral to shaping how individuals perceive themselves and their roles within their communities.

Moreover, these communal celebrations are not just about preserving traditions but also about reinforcing the bonds between individuals and their communities. They act as a mechanism for individuals to connect with shared values and cultural histories, thus strengthening their sense of belonging. Taylor's argument underscores that personal and collective identities are profoundly interconnected, challenging the notion that selfhood can be understood in isolation from communal contexts.

Michael Walzer's theory of justice posits that justice is not a one-size-fits-all concept but is instead contextually dependent on different social spheres. According to Walzer, each sphere—such as family, education, and politics—operates under its own set of norms and values that shape its criteria for justice. For example, in the sphere of education, cultures may have varied perspectives on what constitutes a fair allocation of resources like scholarships. Some might prioritise merit-based awards, while others emphasise need or community service. Walzer

- ·Justice requires recognising communal influences on identity

- Cultural and communal ties shape identities

- Personal identity is deeply linked to shared values

- Justice varies by social context, reflecting the diverse values

argues that these distinct criteria reflect the values inherent to each sphere, suggesting that justice should be understood within these specific contexts rather than imposed universally.

Walzer's approach underscores the importance of respecting diverse perspectives within a pluralistic society. By acknowledging that justice is not a singular, universal principle but rather a set of context-specific norms, Walzer's theory advocates for a nuanced understanding of fairness. This means that rather than imposing a uniform standard of justice, societies should accommodate and respect the various criteria that emerge from different communal contexts. In doing so, Walzer's theory promotes a more inclusive and sensitive approach to addressing justice in a way that honours the unique values and norms of each social sphere.

- ·Respecting diverse criteria for justice ensures a more inclusive approach

4.3.2 Debates in Multiculturalism

a) Will Kymlicka on Group-Differentiated Rights

Will Kymlicka, a prominent Canadian political philosopher, argues for the necessity of granting group-differentiated rights as a means of protecting minority cultures within a multicultural society. He contends that a one-size-fits-all approach to rights often fails to address the unique challenges faced by minority groups, whose cultural identities may be at risk in a majority-dominated society. Group-differentiated rights include provisions such as language preservation, cultural autonomy, and representation within political structures. These rights aim to enable minority groups to maintain and develop their distinct identities while participating fully in the broader society. Kymlicka emphasises that without these protections, minority cultures might be assimilated into the dominant culture, leading to a loss of cultural diversity and undermining the principle of equality within a liberal framework.

- Importance of group-specific rights in safeguarding cultural diversity within a liberal society.

In Canada, the government's policies toward First Nations communities exemplify Kymlicka's advocacy for supporting minority cultures. The Canadian government has implemented specific measures such as funding for indigenous language preservation programs, which are crucial for maintaining the linguistic heritage of First Nations. Additionally, self-governance agreements have been established, allowing First Nations communities to exercise greater control over their affairs, including education, land management, and legal matters. These policies reflect Kymlicka's argument that in

- Canada's policies exemplify the protection of minority cultures

a multicultural society, it is not enough to merely recognise individual rights; there must also be a commitment to protecting the cultural identities of minority groups through targeted, group-specific rights. By doing so, Canada seeks to balance the broader liberal values of equality and justice with the need to preserve and promote cultural diversity.

b) Bhikhu Parekh's Pluralist Universalism

Another prominent political theorist, Bhikhu Parekh, promotes a nuanced form of universalism that strives to balance respect for cultural diversity with adherence to universal human rights. He contends that while universal principles are essential, they should not be imposed rigidly without considering the unique cultural contexts in which they are applied. Instead, these principles must be interpreted flexibly, allowing for variations that align with local traditions and values. By doing so, Parekh seeks to avoid cultural imperialism and promote a more inclusive understanding of human rights that resonates across different societies.

- The importance of cultural sensitivity in applying universal human rights

For instance, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights serves as a global benchmark for human rights, but its application in various cultural settings often requires adaptation. In regions where communal life and traditional practices are integral to the social fabric, applying these rights might involve modifying certain principles to fit local customs better. For example, ensuring gender equality might require working within cultural norms rather than directly opposing them, thus creating a more culturally sensitive approach to human rights. This example highlights Parekh's approach to integrating universalism with cultural sensitivity, demonstrating how universal principles can coexist harmoniously with cultural diversity.

- Universal principles can coexist with cultural diversity through careful adaptation

c) Iris Marion Young's Politics of Difference

Iris Marion Young, an American political philosopher, advocates for the recognition of diverse identities as a central component in the pursuit of social justice. She argues that traditional approaches often aim to assimilate individuals into a dominant cultural framework, which can erase or marginalise the unique identities of minority groups. Her concept of the "politics of difference" challenges this assimilationist mindset by emphasising the importance of acknowledging and valuing the distinct cultural, social, and historical experiences that

shape different identities. Young asserts that achieving genuine social justice requires policies and practices that actively recognise and accommodate the specific needs and rights of various cultural groups rather than forcing them to conform to a one-size-fits-all standard.

4.3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion

Inclusion and exclusion are fundamental concepts in political and social philosophy, addressing how individuals and groups are integrated or marginalised within societal frameworks. Philosophically, these concepts grapple with the principles of justice, equality, and recognition, questioning how societies can equitably integrate diverse identities while ensuring that all members have access to opportunities and resources. Inclusion seeks to incorporate marginalised groups into the social fabric, promoting their participation and representation. In contrast, exclusion reflects the systemic barriers and biases that prevent certain groups from fully participating in societal benefits. The philosophical debate surrounding these issues involves examining the balance between accommodating diversity and maintaining social cohesion and understanding how historical and structural inequalities shape experiences of inclusion and exclusion.

For example, affirmative action policies in education across different countries in the world are designed to address historical inequalities by providing underrepresented groups with enhanced opportunities for academic advancement. These policies aim to counteract systemic biases and promote inclusion by giving marginalised students better access to resources and opportunities. Such measures highlight the ongoing challenge of achieving equitable integration and ensuring that all individuals can participate fully in societal benefits, demonstrating the complex interplay between inclusion efforts and structural barriers.

4.3.4 Affirmative Action and Cultural Accommodation

Affirmative action policies aim to rectify historical inequalities by providing underrepresented groups with enhanced opportunities. Cultural accommodation involves adjusting public institutions to better support diverse cultural practices. Gender quotas in political representation illustrate affirmative action by increasing the representation of historically margin-

alised groups and fostering more inclusive governance. Nancy Fraser's theory asserts that social justice requires addressing both economic inequalities (redistribution) and cultural injustices (recognition). She argues that these aspects are interconnected and must be tackled together to achieve true inclusion. This approach is especially evident when considering the concept of the "double burden," where individuals face simultaneous economic and cultural marginalisation. For instance, policies that support minority-owned businesses and anti-discrimination measures aim to address both economic disadvantages and cultural marginalisation. Fraser's integrated approach highlights that neglecting either dimension of justice results in incomplete solutions, as addressing only economic issues without cultural recognition, or vice versa, fails to achieve comprehensive social equity.

- The "double burden" exemplifies how economic and cultural oppressions intersect

The Indian context vividly illustrates Fraser's concept of the double burden. Dalit women, for example, face both economic and cultural marginalisation. Economically, they struggle with low wages and limited access to resources, while culturally, they endure systemic discrimination and exclusion. This dual struggle emphasises the necessity of addressing both dimensions simultaneously. Programs like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) aim to mitigate economic inequalities by providing wage employment to marginalised communities, while reservation policies in education and employment seek to counteract cultural biases and promote representation. These combined efforts reflect the need to confront both economic and cultural injustices to achieve genuine social inclusion.

- True justice demands a dual focus on economic redistribution and cultural recognition

4.3.5 Critiques of Multiculturalism

a) Brian Barry's Critique

Brian Barry's critique of multiculturalism centres on the potential for societal fragmentation, a phenomenon he argues can arise from the rigid compartmentalisation of cultural groups within a society. Barry posits that the proliferation of distinct cultural enclaves can lead to a loss of a unified societal identity, thereby undermining social cohesion and the shared values necessary for a stable and integrated community. This critique is rooted in the concern that when cultural groups become insular and isolated, they may prioritise their unique identities over collective social goals, leading to a weakening of the overarching societal fabric.

- The insularity of ethnic enclaves challenges a cohesive societal identity

The development of ethnic enclaves in urban environments,

such as the establishment of Little India or Chinatown in various cities, exemplifies Barry's concerns. These enclaves, while providing a sense of community and cultural preservation for their inhabitants, can also reinforce cultural separateness and limit opportunities for cross-cultural interaction. Barry argues that this fragmentation impedes the development of a shared national identity and can create barriers to mutual understanding and social integration. In his view, the emphasis on distinct cultural identities can dilute common societal values and contribute to a fragmented social landscape.

b) Susan Moller Okin's Feminist Critique

Susan Moller Okin raises critical concerns about the potential conflicts between multicultural policies and gender equality. She argues that while multiculturalism aims to respect and preserve cultural diversity, it may inadvertently support practices that undermine the rights of women and other vulnerable groups. Okin asserts that cultural accommodation should not be prioritised over fundamental individual freedoms and gender justice. For instance, the debate over practices like polygamy within multicultural societies illustrates this tension. While such practices are often defended as essential cultural traditions, they can perpetuate gender inequalities and infringe upon the rights of women and children, challenging the commitment to gender equality.

Okin's argument further emphasises that multicultural policies must be critically examined to ensure that they do not perpetuate harm under the guise of cultural preservation. This calls for a rigorous approach to policy-making where the protection of individual rights and the promotion of gender justice are integral to multicultural considerations. By addressing these concerns, societies can better reconcile the values of cultural diversity with the principles of justice and equality, ensuring that multiculturalism serves as a framework for inclusive and equitable practices.

c) Charles Taylor's Politics of Recognition

Taylor's theory of the "politics of recognition" underscores the critical need to validate and affirm the identities of individuals and groups as a cornerstone of social inclusion. He posits that societal participation and individual self-worth are deeply intertwined with how identities are recognised and

valued within the public sphere. Taylor argues that misrecognition, or the failure to acknowledge someone's identity, can lead to profound harm, including diminished self-esteem and a fractured sense of belonging. This theoretical framework can be observed in the struggles faced by various marginalised groups seeking recognition of their identities. For instance, the fight for indigenous rights and land recognition in countries like Canada highlights Taylor's argument. The demand for acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples' cultural heritage and land rights reflects a broader struggle for recognition that impacts their social and economic well-being.

Taylor's emphasis on recognition is further illustrated by the challenges Indigenous communities face in securing acknowledgement of their land and cultural rights. The ongoing efforts of these communities to achieve formal recognition and restitution of their ancestral lands illustrate the practical implications of Taylor's theory. This struggle for recognition goes beyond symbolic gestures, requiring concrete legal and policy changes to address historical injustices and promote genuine inclusion. The case of land treaties and cultural preservation efforts among Indigenous groups shows that achieving true equality involves not only legal reforms but also a deep cultural shift towards respecting and valuing diverse identities and histories.

4.3.6 Tolerance and Multiculturalism

Tolerance is a foundational principle in the discourse on multiculturalism, essential for the coexistence of diverse cultural identities within a society. In philosophical terms, tolerance is not merely an act of passive acceptance; it is an active engagement with difference that recognises and respects the intrinsic value of varied cultural perspectives. In this sense, tolerance is both an ethical stance and a social virtue, promoting a framework within which diversity can flourish.

The roots of tolerance as a philosophical concept can be traced back to early modern thought, where it emerged as a response to religious conflict and the desire for social harmony. John Locke's *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689) is a seminal text in this regard. Locke argued that the use of coercion in matters of faith is both ineffective and morally wrong, asserting that true belief cannot be compelled by force. His conception of tolerance was grounded in the principles of individual autonomy and freedom of conscience, which remain central to contemporary understandings of multiculturalism.

- · Recognition is a fundamental aspect of achieving social justice

- Inclusion and respect for diverse identities are integral to a just and equitable society.

- · Tolerance as an ethical stance promotes active engagement with diversity.

- Locke's philosophy emphasises autonomy and freedom of conscience as foundations of tolerance.

Similarly, Voltaire, in his *Treatise on Tolerance* (1763), addressed the dangers of religious intolerance and fanaticism, advocating for a society where freedom of thought and expression are protected as fundamental rights. Voltaire's emphasis on reason and humanism as antidotes to intolerance reflects a broader Enlightenment view that sees tolerance as a prerequisite for progress and social cohesion. In these early modern texts, tolerance is portrayed not as a mere concession to difference but as a necessary condition for a just and enlightened society.

In the context of multiculturalism, the philosophical idea of tolerance extends beyond religious freedom to encompass a broader acceptance of cultural, ethnic, and social diversity. This extension raises important questions about the nature and limits of tolerance. Should all cultural practices be tolerated, even if they conflict with widely accepted ethical norms or human rights? For example, while multiculturalism encourages respect for cultural traditions, practices that involve harm or oppression, such as female genital mutilation or forced marriage, challenge the boundaries of what a tolerant society should permit.

Philosophically, this tension is addressed through frameworks that balance the respect for cultural diversity with the protection of fundamental rights. John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* (1859) offers a crucial perspective here. Mill's harm principle—asserting that the actions of individuals should only be limited to prevent harm to others—provides a basis for understanding the limits of tolerance. Under this view, tolerance is not limitless; it is bound by the imperative to prevent harm and protect the rights and dignity of individuals.

Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy, particularly as articulated in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), further enriches the discourse on tolerance. Kant's emphasis on respect for individuals as autonomous moral agents underpins a duty to tolerate differing beliefs and practices, provided they do not infringe upon the autonomy and rights of others. This Kantian view frames tolerance as a rational duty rooted in respect for human dignity, reinforcing the idea that tolerance must be guided by moral principles that safeguard individual freedom and equality.

While previous discussions have noted the contributions

- Tolerant engagement requires balancing cultural diversity with universal moral commitments.

of Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka in linking tolerance to multiculturalism, it is crucial to contextualise their arguments within a broader philosophical framework. Both thinkers explore how recognition of cultural diversity can coexist with a commitment to universal rights, suggesting that tolerance involves a delicate balancing act between cultural particularism and moral universalism. This nuanced approach to tolerance challenges simplistic understandings and encourages a more sophisticated engagement with the complexities of multicultural societies.

- Tolerance as a rigorous philosophical commitment fosters harmony

Tolerance is not merely about allowing differences to exist; it is about actively engaging with them in a manner that respects and affirms the dignity of all individuals. As a cornerstone of multiculturalism, tolerance demands a rigorous philosophical commitment to both diversity and equality, ensuring that cultural differences are honoured without compromising fundamental human rights. By fostering a society that values both diversity and shared ethical principles, tolerance becomes a vital force for social harmony and justice.

Summarized Overview

Multiculturalism advocates for recognising and accommodating diverse cultural identities within political frameworks, asserting that policies should support group-specific rights to preserve minority cultures. Charles Taylor emphasises the role of cultural belonging in shaping personal identity, challenging the liberal focus on individual autonomy. Communitarianism, as articulated by Michael Sandel, critiques liberalism's emphasis on individual rights by highlighting the communal context that influences personal identity. Will Kymlicka's defence of multiculturalism as a means to achieve justice through supporting cultural group rights and Bhikhu Parekh's argument that universal justice must consider cultural contexts are also significant. Critiques from Brian Barry on potential societal fragmentation due to multicultural policies and Susan Moller Okin's feminist perspective on how multiculturalism may perpetuate gender inequalities are also examined. The tension between accommodating cultural diversity and upholding universal principles of justice reflects the intricate balance required to address both individual and communal needs.

Self-Assessment

1. What are the key differences between the communitarian and liberal views of human nature?
2. How does communitarianism influence contemporary debates on multiculturalism?
3. Discuss the potential conflicts between cultural recognition and universal human rights in multicultural societies.

Assignments

1. How do multicultural policies address issues of inclusion and exclusion?
2. What do John Locke, Voltaire, and Immanuel Kant say about tolerance, and how do their ideas help us understand tolerance in multicultural societies today?
3. What are the main critiques of multiculturalism from a communitarian perspective?

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1. Taylor, Charles. *Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition."* Princeton University Press, 1992.
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4. Parekh, Bhikhu. *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.
5. Young, Iris Marion. *Justice and the Politics of Difference.* Princeton University Press, 1990.

Suggested Reading

1. Maclure, Jocelyn, and Charles Taylor. *Secularism and Freedom of Conscience.* Harvard University Press, 2011.

2. Brubaker, Rogers. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany.* Harvard University Press, 1992.

3. Holliday, Ian, and David Held. *Global Democracy: Normative and Empirical Perspectives.* Routledge, 2006.

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5. Tilly, Charles. *Contention and Democracy in Europe, 1650-2000.* Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

UNIT 4
Secularism Debate in India

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- explain the core principles of secularism and their philosophical foundations.

- identify and contrast the differences between Indian and Western secularism.

- evaluate the perspectives of Romila Thapar, Irfan Habib, Prabhat Patnaik, and Rajeev Bhargava on secularism.

- discuss the criticisms and challenges faced by secularism, including critiques of major thinkers.

- illustrate how secularism applies to contemporary issues in India.

Background

Imagine a vibrant marketplace, alive with the sights and sounds of a multitude of cultures. Amidst the rich diversity of vendors and customers, a public announcement calls the crowd to an interfaith gathering, encouraging a conversation that bridges religious divides. Each participant, representing different faiths, comes together in a shared space, seeking not only to express their unique identities but also to find common ground. This scene captures the essence of secularism in India—a principle designed to balance diverse religious identities while maintaining state neutrality. Forged from a historical legacy of religious conflict and colonial exploitation, secularism was intended to unify a fractured society by ensuring freedom of religious practice and state impartiality. The practical application, however, is fraught with complexities and ongoing debates, which we will explore through philosophical foundations, contrasting interpretations of secularism, and perspectives of major thinkers such as Romila Thapar, Irfan Habib, Prabhat Patnaik, and Rajeev Bhargava. This unit will also address the criticisms and challenges facing secularism, evaluating whether the ideal of a neutral state can genuinely achieve its goals in the face of political and social realities.

Discussion

4.4.1 Philosophical Foundations of Secularism

a) The Principle of Neutrality: John Locke's Vision

John Locke's contributions to the philosophy of secularism are foundational. In his influential work, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), Locke argues vehemently for the separation of church and state. Locke posits that religious beliefs are inherently personal and cannot be legislated or enforced by the state. His principle of religious toleration asserts that for a society to be just, it must allow individuals to follow their own religious beliefs without state interference. Locke's philosophy emerged from a context of intense religious conflict in England, where the imposition of religious orthodoxy by the state led to persecution and civil strife.

Locke's approach also addresses the dangers of religious majoritarianism, where the dominant religious group imposes its beliefs on others. By advocating for a secular state, Locke aimed to prevent such tyranny and promote a civil society where individuals of diverse beliefs could coexist peacefully. His vision of secularism ensures that state authority remains neutral, thus protecting the rights of minority religious groups and fostering a more inclusive society.

b) Rational Discourse and the Secular State: Immanuel Kant's Perspective

Immanuel Kant's philosophy provides a robust framework for understanding the role of secularism in promoting rational public discourse. In *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), Kant argues that public reason should be free from religious influence to ensure that political decisions are based on rational and universal principles. According to Kant, secularism is crucial for creating a public sphere where policies are debated and decided through reason rather than religious doctrine. This approach aims to foster a democratic process grounded in rationality, where laws and policies reflect universal ethical standards rather than sectarian interests.

Kant's emphasis on rational discourse also highlights the need for secularism to protect the autonomy of individuals in their

- Secularism prevents religious tyranny by ensuring state neutrality.

- The importance of religious freedom in a pluralistic society.

- Rational public discourse thrives in a secular state free from religious biases.

reasoning processes. By separating religious considerations from state affairs, secularism allows for a more objective evaluation of policies and practices, promoting fairness and justice in a pluralistic society. This separation, according to Kant, is essential for maintaining the integrity of public debate and ensuring that all citizens are treated equally under the law.

c) Secularism as Equal Liberty: Charles Taylor's Contemporary View

Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2007) offers a nuanced perspective on secularism in the modern context. Taylor argues that secularism should not be viewed merely as the exclusion of religion from public life but as a framework that ensures equal liberty for all belief systems. He contends that a secular state must actively accommodate diverse religious and non-religious perspectives, ensuring that no particular belief system is given preferential treatment. Taylor's analysis reflects a deep engagement with the complexities of modern pluralism, where secularism is seen as a means to balance competing beliefs and foster mutual respect.

Taylor also addresses the challenge of achieving genuine equality in a secular society. He suggests that secularism must be flexible and inclusive, recognising the varied ways in which people experience and express their beliefs. By promoting a culture of respect and accommodation, Taylor believes secularism can help create a more harmonious and equitable society where individuals from different backgrounds can coexist and thrive without fear of discrimination or marginalization.

d)The Challenge of Secular Neutrality: John Rawls and the Theory of Justice

John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (1971) addresses the complex issue of maintaining secular neutrality in a diverse society. Rawls introduces the concept of the "veil of ignorance," a thought experiment designed to ensure impartiality in the creation of societal rules. By imagining that individuals are unaware of their own personal circumstances, including their religious affiliations, Rawls seeks to design principles of justice that are fair and unbiased. This approach underscores the need for secularism to ensure that laws and policies are crafted without privileging any particular group or belief system.

Rawls' theory emphasises that a just society must be built on principles that everyone could agree to from an original position of equality. This requires that secularism not only separate religion from state functions but also actively promote fairness and equity. According to Rawls, secularism plays a crucial role in creating a social framework where policies are developed through a process that respects the diversity of religious and non-religious perspectives, ensuring that all citizens are treated justly and equitably.

4.4.2 Major Thinkers and Perspectives on Indian Secularism

a) Romila Thapar

Romila Thapar critiques the application of secularism in India by highlighting its historical and contextual limitations. In *The Past and the Present: Secularism in India* (2009), she argues that the secular framework often fails to address the deep-seated historical grievances and socio-economic disparities that fuel communal tensions. Thapar points out that these issues, rooted in the colonial strategy of "divide and rule," have left lasting scars that challenge the neutrality of the state. For example, the British colonial government's manipulation of religious identities has led to persistent communal divisions, which secularism in its current form struggles to overcome. An instance of this can be seen in the recurrent communal riots in India, where historical mistrust between religious communities, exacerbated by economic disparities, plays a significant role. Thapar calls for a reinterpretation of secularism that not only upholds state neutrality but also actively addresses the socio-economic inequalities that exacerbate religious tensions.

Thapar further contends that secularism in India is often used more as a tool for political convenience than as a genuine mechanism for social justice. She argues that political parties frequently manipulate secular ideals to gain support from specific religious groups rather than promoting true secular values. For instance, the use of religious rhetoric during elections or selective appeasement of religious communities by political leaders undermines the credibility of secularism. An example of this is the politicisation of the Ram Temple issue in Ayodhya, where political motivations overshadowed the principle of secularism. Thapar advocates for a more nuanced understanding of secularism that considers historical injustices and seeks to address the root causes of communal conflict.

However, critics of Thapar's perspective argue that her approach may overemphasise historical grievances at the expense of fostering a forward-looking secularism. For example, Sunil Khilnani, in *The Idea of India* (1997), suggests that focusing too much on historical injustices can prevent the development of a secularism that looks to the future and fosters national unity. Khilnani argues that while acknowledging history is important, secularism should aim to transcend historical divisions and focus on creating a common civic identity that unites all citizens, irrespective of their religious backgrounds.

b) Irfan Habib

Irfan Habib's perspective on secularism, detailed in *Secularism and the Indian State: Historical Perspectives* (2002), underscores its role in safeguarding minority rights. Habib emphasises that secularism should serve as a protective shield for minorities, ensuring their rights and freedom to practice their religion without interference or discrimination by the state. For example, he argues that secularism is vital for a diverse country like India, where religious minorities need assurance that they will not be marginalised or oppressed. An example of this is the protection of the right to freely practice Islam in India, which is crucial for maintaining communal harmony and preventing discrimination against Muslim minorities. This interpretation of secularism aims to provide a legal and social framework that prevents any form of religious domination or persecution.

Habib's focus on minority rights has, however, been critiqued for its potential to alienate the majority community. Akeel Bilgrami, in *Secularism, Identity, and Enchantment* (2014), argues that an excessive focus on minority rights might create a perception that secularism is biased against the majority, thus undermining its broad acceptance. Bilgrami suggests that secularism should aim for a balanced approach that not only protects minorities but also addresses the concerns of the majority. For instance, he points out that policies perceived as disproportionately favouring minorities could lead to a backlash from the majority community, thereby weakening the secular fabric. This would involve fostering a sense of inclusivity and shared values that resonate with all communities, thereby strengthening the foundation of secularism.

c) Prabhat Patnaik

Patnaik's view on secularism, as presented in *Secularism and Social Justice in India* (2010), integrates secularism with social justice. Patnaik argues that secularism is not just about religious neutrality but also about addressing socio-economic inequalities. He believes that a true secular state must ensure fair treatment for all communities, particularly those that are socio-economically disadvantaged. For example, Patnaik suggests that secularism should be used as a tool to combat caste discrimination and economic disparities, which are often intertwined with religious identities in India. An example is the reservation policies in the country, aimed at uplifting historically marginalised communities, which Patnaik believes should be framed within a secularist framework to promote broader social equity.

- Patnaik integrates secularism with social justice, emphasising fair treatment for all.

Patnaik's approach, however, has faced criticism from scholars like Ashis Nandy. In *An Ambiguous Journey to the City: The Village and Other Odd Ruins of the Self in the Indian Imagination* (2000), Nandy argues that integrating secularism with socio-economic issues may dilute its core principle of religious neutrality. He suggests that when secularism is used to address social justice issues, it risks becoming politicised and losing its focus on maintaining religious impartiality. Nandy advocates for a clearer distinction between secularism as a political principle and social justice as a separate agenda. For example, Nandy argues that if secularism is seen primarily as a tool for economic redistribution, it could alienate those who view it as primarily about religious neutrality.

- ·Nandy argues that combining secularism with social justice could dilute religious neutrality.

d)Rajeev Bhargava

Bhargava's nuanced analysis of secularism, discussed in *Secularism and Its Discontents: Theories and Practices* (1998), emphasises the need to balance religious diversity with state neutrality. Bhargava proposes a model of "principled distance," where the state maintains a flexible approach, engaging with religious communities when necessary to promote harmony and social cohesion. He argues that secularism should not be a rigid doctrine but a dynamic framework that accommodates the diverse religious practices and beliefs found in India. For example, this might involve the state intervening in religious affairs to prevent discrimination or promote social reform while maintaining overall neutrality. A case in point is the state's intervention in abolishing the practice of triple ta-

- Advocates for a flexible, principled approach to secularism that balances diversity and neutrality.

laq (instant divorce) among Muslims in India, which Bhargava sees as a necessary step to ensure gender equality while still respecting religious practices.

Bhargava's flexible model, however, has been critiqued by T. N. Madan in *Secularism in Its Place* (2009). Madan argues that such flexibility could lead to inconsistencies in applying secular principles, potentially undermining the coherence of secularism. He suggests that too much flexibility might result in arbitrary state interventions that could be perceived as biased, thus weakening the secular fabric of the nation. For example, if the state is seen as intervening more in some religions than others, it could lead to accusations of partiality, thereby eroding trust in secular governance. Madan emphasises the need for a clear framework that upholds core secular values while adapting to diverse contexts.

- Madan warns against the risks of inconsistencies in a flexible approach to secularism.

4.4.3 General Criticisms and Challenges
a) Indian vs. Western Secularism

The debate between Indian and Western secularism reveals significant differences in how secularism is conceptualised and applied. Western secularism—often exemplified by countries like the United States and France—emphasises a strict separation between religion and state. This model, rooted in the Enlightenment ideals of individual freedom and rational governance, advocates for a secular state that excludes religious influences from public life. In the United States, the Constitution explicitly prohibits the government from making any law "respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Similarly, in France, the principle of *laïcité* enforces a clear boundary between religion and state, promoting a public sphere free from religious symbols and practices, as seen in policies like the ban on conspicuous religious symbols in public schools.

- Western secularism is defined by a clear separation of religion and state

In contrast, Indian secularism, influenced by the country's diverse and pluralistic society, adopts a more accommodative approach. Instead of a strict separation, the Indian model envisions a state that is equidistant from all religions, engaging with and respecting various religious communities to ensure communal harmony. This approach is enshrined in the Indian Constitution, particularly in Articles 25 to 28, which guarantees freedom of religion while allowing the state to intervene in religious affairs to uphold social reform and

- Indian secularism balances respect for religious diversity with the pluralistic ethos.

prevent discrimination. For example, the state has enacted laws to regulate religious practices deemed exploitative, such as the abolition of untouchability (Article 17) and the criminalisation of practices like *Sati*.

b) State and Religion in India

The state's involvement in religious institutions in India has evolved through a complex interplay of historical, economic, and socio-political factors. During the British colonial period, Hindu temples were not only religious centres but also significant repositories of public wealth, often endowed by kings and local rulers. This wealth included land, donations, and valuable assets intended for religious and charitable purposes. The British administration took over these temples to combat widespread corruption and mismanagement by local authorities, ensuring that the resources were used appropriately.

Following independence, the newly formed democratic government of India decided to continue this interventionist approach, maintaining state overview over Hindu temples. This was seen as a continuation of the colonial policy aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability. However, this policy was primarily focused on Hindu temples, reflecting their substantial economic and social role within the community. For instance, the Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act of 1951 established a system for the state to administer and manage Hindu temples to ensure their proper functioning.

In contrast, other religious institutions, such as Jain temples, Buddhist monasteries, and Parsi fire temples, have generally not experienced similar state involvement. Jain temples and Buddhist monasteries, while also significant, were historically less entangled with the economic activities that triggered state oversight during the colonial era. Parsi fire temples, known for their distinct practices and smaller community size, have largely been administered by the Parsi community itself. Similarly, churches and mosques have predominantly been managed by their respective communities, with minimal state intervention. This differential treatment highlights the historical and contextual factors that influenced the extent of state involvement in various religious institutions.

- The British intervened in temple administration to address corruption and ensure proper use of resources.

- Post-independence, state control of Hindu temples continued, aiming for transparency and accountability

- The state's involvement in religious institutions reflects historical economic roles and practices

4.4.4 Other Engagements and Interactions Between Religions and the State in India

The relationship between religions and the state in India encompasses various forms of engagement beyond administrative control. The Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and provides specific protections for minority communities. This includes the right to manage religious affairs, establish and administer educational institutions, and practice religion freely without state interference. For instance, Article 30 of the Constitution grants religious and linguistic minorities the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice, ensuring that communities can preserve their cultural and religious identity through education.

State support for religious practices also manifests in financial assistance and subsidies. One prominent example is the government's funding for the Hajj pilgrimage, which provides financial support to Muslim pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia. Similarly, minority-run educational institutions receive grants and support to help maintain their operations and provide quality education within their communities. This approach aims to support religious practices and promote educational opportunities for minority groups, reflecting the state's commitment to religious diversity and inclusion.

In addition to these forms of support, the state plays a role in managing communal tensions and fostering social harmony. This involves dialogues with religious leaders, implementing policies to address grievances, and promoting interfaith initiatives. For example, various state-sponsored committees and commissions have been established to address issues related to religious violence and communal disputes, seeking to resolve conflicts and promote peace among different religious communities. The Indian state engages with religions through constitutional protections, financial support, and efforts to manage communal harmony, reflecting a commitment to accommodating diverse religious practices.

4.4.5 Philosophical Implications of State-Religion Interactions

The interactions between the state and religion in India have profound philosophical implications for the individual. At a fundamental level, the relationship between state and reli-

- The Indian Constitution safeguards religious freedoms and minority rights.

- Financial support from the state promotes religious diversity and education.

- The state actively manages communal harmony and promotes interfaith dialogue.

- Secularism strives to balance individual freedom with the protection of diverse religious beliefs.

- State intervention in religious affairs can influence personal identity

- The state's handling of religious diversity and inclusion impacts individuals' perceptions of justice and belonging.

gion influences the concept of individual freedom and identity. Secularism, as a principle, seeks to ensure that individuals can practice their religion freely without state interference while also protecting the rights of those who do not adhere to any religious beliefs. This balance is crucial for maintaining personal autonomy and freedom of thought.

Philosophically, the state's involvement in religious affairs can affect an individual's sense of personal identity and belonging. For instance, when the state administers religious institutions or provides financial support to certain religious practices, it may shape the way individuals perceive their own religious identity and the role of religion in public life. This can lead to a sense of dependence on the state for religious practices or, conversely, a feeling of alienation if state policies do not align with personal religious beliefs.

Moreover, the state's approach to managing religious diversity and communal tensions can impact individual experiences of social justice and equality. For example, policies that favour one religious community over others can create perceptions of inequality and injustice among individuals. Conversely, inclusive policies that seek to accommodate and support diverse religious practices can enhance individuals' sense of belonging and equality within a pluralistic society. In sum, the philosophical implications of state-religion interactions in India involve a delicate balance between individual freedom, religious identity, and social justice. Ensuring that state policies respect and protect diverse religious practices while maintaining neutrality is essential for fostering a fair and inclusive society.

Summarized Overview

Secularism in India, framed against a backdrop of diverse religious identities and historical conflicts, aims to balance the multitude of faiths within the state's purview while maintaining neutrality. This principle emerged as a solution to religious strife and colonial exploitation, seeking to unify a fragmented society by upholding freedom of religious practice and the impartiality of the state. Philosophically, secularism is underpinned by principles such as John Locke's call for religious toleration and separation of church and state, Immanuel Kant's advocacy for rational public discourse free from religious influence, and John Rawls' concept of impartiality through the "veil of ignorance." Charles Taylor's modern perspective enriches this understanding by emphasising the importance of equal liberty for all belief systems within a secular framework. Indian secularism, distinct from Western models like those in the United States and France, adopts an accommodative stance, engaging with and respecting various religions to ensure communal harmony while promoting social reform and preventing discrimination. This approach is reflected in historical and contemporary state interventions, from colonial-era management of Hindu temples to post-independence overview and support for various religious communities. Despite these efforts, the application of secularism in India is often criticized for failing to address deep-seated socio-economic inequalities and political manipulations. Major thinkers such as Romila Thapar, Irfan Habib, Prabhat Patnaik, and Rajeev Bhargava offer diverse perspectives on secularism, highlighting its challenges and proposing reforms to better address historical injustices, protect minority rights, and integrate secularism with social justice. Through these debates and practical engagements, secularism continues to evolve in India, striving to create a more inclusive and equitable society amidst its complex socio-political landscape.

Self-Assessment

1. Analyze the philosophical distinctions between Indian and Western secularism. How do these differences impact the practical implementation of secularism in India?

2. Critically assess the effectiveness of Indian secularism in maintaining neutrality while engaging with religious communities. Provide examples to support your argument.

3. Discuss the criticisms raised by Harbans Mukhia against Romila Thapar's views.

Assignments

1. Examine Akeel Bilgrami's critique of Irfan Habib's approach to secularism, particularly his focus on minority rights.

2. Evaluate Ashis Nandy's criticism of Prabhat Patnaik's integration of secularism with social justice. Do you think secularism should address broader socio-economic issues, or should it remain focused on religious neutrality?

3. Analyze T. N. Madan's critique of Rajeev Bhargava's concept of contextual secularism. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach in the diverse Indian society?

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3. Patnaik, Prabhat. *Secularism and Social Justice in India*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

4. Bhargava, Rajeev. *Secularism and Its Discontents: Theories and Practices*. Routledge, 1998.

5. Baruah, Sanjib. *Communalism and Secularism in India: A Historical Perspective*. Harvard University Press, 2003.

Suggested Reading

1. Rajagopal, Arvind. *Secularism and Its Alternatives: Debates and Dilemmas*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

2. Khan, Shamsul. *The Limits of Secularism: Indian Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

3. Chandra, Bipan. *Modern India: Secularism and Beyond*. Penguin Books, 2006.

4. Nandy, Ashis. *The Intimate Enemy: Secularism and Communalism*. Oxford University Press, 1983.

5. Sharma, Arvind. *Secularism in India: A Critical Reassessment*. Sage Publications, 2012.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

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വിശ്വപൗരരായി മാറണം
ഗ്രഹപ്രസാദമായ് വിളങ്ങണം
ഗുരുപ്രകാശമേ നയിക്കണേ

കൂരിരുട്ടിൽ നിന്നു ഞങ്ങളെ
സൂര്യവീഥിയിൽ തെളിക്കണം
സ്നേഹദീപ്തിയായ് വിളങ്ങണം
നീതിവൈജയന്തി പാറണം

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ബോധരശ്മിയിൽ തിളങ്ങുവാൻ
ജ്ഞാനകേന്ദ്രമേ ജ്വലിക്കണേ

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Socio-Political Philosophy

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