



MA (Sociology)

**SECOND SEMESTER
MASOC 407**



INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
IDE
Rajiv Gandhi University

www.ide.rgu.ac.in

PERSPECTIVES ON INDIAN SOCIETY

PERSPECTIVES ON INDIAN SOCIETY

PART-2

MA [Sociology]

**SECOND SEMESTER
MASOC 407**



RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112

BOARD OF STUDIES

1.	Prof. M Hussain Head, Department of Sociology, R.G.U.	Chairman (Ex-officio)
2.	Shri Bikash Bage Assistant Professor Department of Sociology, R.G.U.	Member
3.	Dr. S. R. Parhi Assistant Professor Department of Sociology, R.G.U.	Member
4.	S. Yadav Assistant Professor Department of Sociology, R.G.U.	Member
5.	Prof. V. Xaxa Deputy Director Tata Institute of Social Science, Guwahati	Member
6.	Prof. P. Jogdand Dept. of Sociology Mumbai University, Mumbai	Member
7.	Prof. J. Borbora Head, Department of Sociology Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Assam	Member

Reviewer

Prof. Maqbul Hussain, Professor, Sociology Department, Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh

Authors:

Dr. Sujit Thakur (Unit: 1.3)

Amit Chamarla (Units: 2.2, 3.2, 4.3, 5.9)

Dr. Syamala K. and Dr. P. I. Devaraj (Unit: 5.0-5.8, 5.10-5.14)

Vikas Publishing House (Units: 1.0-1.2, 1.4-1.11, 2.0-2.1, 2.2.1-2.8, 3.0-3.1, 3.2.1-3.2.4, 3.3-3.8, 4.0-4.2, 4.4-4.9)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication which is material protected by this copyright notice may be reproduced or transmitted or utilized or stored in any form or by any means now known or hereinafter invented, electronic, digital or mechanical, including photocopying, scanning, recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without prior written permission from the Publisher.

"Information contained in this book has been published by Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. and has been obtained by its Authors from sources believed to be reliable and are correct to the best of their knowledge. However, IDE—Rajiv Gandhi University, the publishers and its Authors shall be in no event be liable for any errors, omissions or damages arising out of use of this information and specifically disclaim any implied warranties or merchantability or fitness for any particular use"



Vikas® is the registered trademark of Vikas® Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.

VIKAS® PUBLISHING HOUSE PVT. LTD.

E-28, Sector-8, Noida - 201301 (UP)

Phone: 0120-4078990 • Fax: 0120-4078999

Regd. Office: 7361, Ravindra Mansion, Ram Nagar, New Delhi - 110 055

• Website: www.vikaspublishing.com • Email: helpline@vikaspublishing.com

About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Perspectives on Indian Society

Syllabi

Mapping in Book

UNIT 1 Marxist Perspective

D.P. Mukherjee

A.R. Desai

UNIT 2 Marxist Perspective

R.K. Mukherjee

D.D. Kosambi

UNIT 3 Subaltern Perspective

B.R. Ambedker

Ranajit Guha

UNIT 4 Cultural perspective

Yogendra Singh

CONTENTS

UNIT 1 MARXIST PERSPECTIVES-I

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Unit Objectives
- 1.2 Marxist View of Social Change
 - 1.2.1 Marxist Theory of Social Change
 - 1.2.2 Dialectical Materialism
- 1.3 Marxist Perspectives on Indian Society
 - 1.3.1 Dhurjati Prasad Mukherjee
 - 1.3.2 A. R. Desai
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 Key Terms
- 1.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 1.7 Questions and Exercises
- 1.8 Further Reading

UNIT 2 MARXIST PERSPECTIVES-II

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 Marxist Perspectives on Indian Society
 - 2.3.1 R.K. Mukherjee
- 2.3 Marxian Analysis on the Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism
 - 2.3.1 DD. Kosambi
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 Key Terms
- 2.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.7 Questions and Exercises
- 2.8 Further Reading

UNIT 3 SUBALTERN PERSPECTIVES

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Unit Objectives
- 3.2 Contribution of Ambedkar to Indian Society
 - 3.2.1 Influences on the Life and Thoughts of Ambedkar
- 3.3 Socio-Political Thoughts of Ambedkar
 - 3.3.1 Ambedkar's Idea of Democratic Socialism
 - 3.3.2 Ambedkar and Indian Democracy
 - 3.3.3 Ambedkar's Views on Economic Development and Planning
- 3.4 Role of Reason in the Philosophy of Ambedkar
 - 3.4.1 Ambedkar's Views on Religion
 - 3.4.2 Ambedkar and Buddhism
- 3.5 Ambedkar and Marxism
- 3.6 Ambedkar's Views on Caste and Untouchability
- 3.7 Ambedkar as the Chief Architect of the Indian Constitution
- 3.8 Disparity in the Socio-Political Views Of Gandhi and Ambedkar
- 3.9 Ranajit Guha
- 3.10 Summary
- 3.11 Key Terms
- 3.12 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 3.13 Questions and Exercises
- 3.14 Further Reading

INTRODUCTION

NOTES

Sociology in simple terms is the study of society. It is a social science where various methods of investigation and analysis are used to develop knowledge about human social activity. This book, *Perspectives on Indian Society*, deals with various perspectives of Indian society.

In India, languages, religions, dance, music, architecture, food and customs differ from place to place. However, they possess a 'unity in diversity'. Indian society is a mix of these varied sub-cultures. In Indian society, family, religion, as well as caste play important roles. For generations, Indian society has been stratified based on the hierarchical caste system. This caste system has resulted in the exploitation of the so-called 'lower' castes. Independent India has tried to undo the historical injustices meted out to them by incorporating features of positive discrimination in her policies. India also happens to be the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Islam is another important religion of India. All of the unique traditions of India's religions have combined to create a syncretic social culture that is both diverse and tolerant.

This book has been designed keeping in mind the self-instruction mode (SIM) format and follows a simple pattern, wherein each unit of the book begins with the 'Introduction' followed by the 'Unit Objectives' for the topic. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with 'Check Your Progress' questions to reinforce the student's understanding of the topic. A list of 'Questions and Exercises' is also provided at the end of each unit. The 'Summary' and 'Key Terms' further act as useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

This book is divided into five units.

Unit 1: Discusses the effects of British Imperialism on Indian society and economy.

Unit 2: Covers textual perspectives of Indian society, especially the views of G.S. Ghurye and Louis Dumont.

Unit 3: Describes structural-functional perspectives of Indian society, especially the views of M.N. Srinivas and S.C. Dube.

Unit 4: Discusses the Marxist perspectives of Indian society, especially the views of D.P. Mukherjee, A.R. Desai, R.K. Mukherjee and D.D. Kosambi.

Unit 5: Covers subaltern perspectives of Indian society, especially the views of B.R. Ambedkar and Ranajit Guha.

UNIT 1 MARXIST PERSPECTIVES

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Unit Objectives
- 1.2 Marxist View of Social Change
 - 1.2.1 Marxist Theory of Social Change
 - 1.2.2 Dialectical Materialism
- 1.3 Marxist Perspectives on Indian Society
 - 1.3.1 Dhurjati Prasad Mukherjee
 - 1.3.3 A.R. Desai
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 Key Terms
- 1.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 1.7 Questions and Exercises
- 1.8 Further Reading

NOTES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learned about structural-functional perspectives of the theorists M.N. Srinivas and S.C. Dube. In this unit, the discussion will turn to the Marxist perspective.

As a student of sociology, you must have heard the name of Karl Marx. The thoughts of this philosopher and revolutionary had a huge impact on the history of the twentieth century; in fact his writings continue to influence thinkers of political science, sociology, economy, history, and so on, to this day. Despite his political orientation towards the creation of a communist society, Marx devoted much of his writings to the dialectical and critical analyses of capitalist society. The dialectic emphasizes that among the elements and critical analyses of capitalist society. The dialectic emphasizes that among the elements of social world there are no simple cause and effect relationships; fact and value are not seemingly divided clearly between a line; there are no hard and fast dividing lines among phenomena in the social world. Marx's analysis of actors and structure should be viewed in the framework of his opinions on human nature, which is also the starting point for his critical analysis of the contradictions inherent within the capitalist structure. Marx stated that a disagreement exists between our human nature and work in the capitalist system. Workers get alienated from their labour because it does not belong to them, but rather to the capitalist owners.

Marx's theories and opinions were a response to the quick changes taking place in Europe, primarily Germany, as a result of industrialization. He also studied the nature of the structures of capitalism and their adverse effects on the actors and elaborated on the pivotal role played by commodities in capitalism. He used the term 'reification' to explain the process whereby social structure becomes naturalised, absolute and independent of human action. In this context, it can be said that capital is the most reified component in a capitalist society. Using the framework enumerated by Marx, and expanded by other Marxist philosophers, this unit will discuss the perspective of Indian Marxist thinkers like R.K. Mukherjee, A.R. Desai, D.P. Mukherjee and D.D. Kosambi.

NOTES

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe A.R. Desai's interpretation of tradition
- Explain R.K. Mukerjee's opinion about values
- Discuss D.D. Kosambi's analysis of feudalism in India
- Examine the Marxist concept of dialectical materialism
- Discuss D.P. Mukherjee notions of the nature of tradition

1.2 MARXIST VIEW OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Karl Marx is considered one of the founders of sociology along with Max Weber and Emile Durkheim. His theories on social change hugely influenced sociologists in the years following his death. Let us take a look at his theory of social change.

1.2.1 Marxist Theory of Social Change

Economics plays a cardinal role in a man's daily life. The noted sociologist and philosopher, Karl Marx, gave the most important theory to show how the economy was a major factor in social change. Marx explained that economy constitutes the basic structure of society. This basic structure consists of the means of production (raw material, labour, machines and so on.) and the relationship of production (e.g. slave-master and slave, lord and serf, capitalist and worker).

Other institutions like family, education, religion, polity, and so on, constitute the superstructure. Change in the means and relationship of production, consequently, leads to the change in various institutions, i.e., in the superstructure of society. This change in the relationship of production occurs as a result of a conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed class, the haves and the have-nots, the ruling and the ruled class. It was a result of this class conflict that society transformed from primitive communism to slavery, slavery to feudalism and from feudalism to capitalism. From capitalism, Marx predicted, two more societal changes would occur due to this class conflict—socialism and communism. The underlying philosophy of socialism is 'from each according to his capacity and to each according to his work' and of communism is 'from each according to his capacity to each according to his need'. Marx envisioned that the socialist society will be ruled by proletariats for a transitional period and gradually a classless communist society would emerge.

In India, a cursory look at 19th and 20th century society shows how society changed as a result of economic developments. Post-independence, industrialization brought enormous changes in the lives of people. Not only did it change the occupation structure in Indian society—with a significant section of society moving away from agriculture to industry—but it also affected inter-personal relationships.

The change from an agriculture based economy to an industrial economy also resulted in people from rural areas migrating to cities to work in factories. This drastically reduced the effect of caste/untouchability and also transformed joint families into nuclear households.

As Karl Marx stated, any change in the means of production (or the material productive forces of society) can lead to changes in the social structure of the society. Some of the ways in which economic factors have acted as drivers of social change include:

1. The rise in material means of livelihood led to the birth of the institutions of marriage and family, which led to the idea of possessions/wealth for the family.
2. In the agricultural stage, the social organization grew more complex, as people settled down at a particular place for raising crops. It led to stability and a rise of villages. The division of labour led to stratification or division in society based on economic factors, i.e., classes. Institutions like kingship and feudalism also came up during this period.
3. Agricultural surplus in Western nations led to the industrial stage and with scientific advancements, machine system of production came into existence. Industrial revolution led to changes in every structure of the society. These changes were:
 - (a) Migration to cities led to urbanization.
 - (b) The extended family system was replaced by the nuclear family.
 - (c) Women joined the labour force, leading to changes in gender roles and relations.
 - (d) Industrial revolution led to a change in society as lords and serfs were replaced by industrialist and workers.
 - (e) The rise of nation-states, as kingship declined in this era.
 - (f) It led to many movements around the world like the Russian Revolution.
 - (g) New ideologies like socialism/capitalism came up.
 - (h) More and more ways of entertainment came to be developed.

Economic factors have been and continue to be very important factors of social change but they are not the only determinants of social change (as Marx said), as these changes were in conjunction with the technological and other changes in the society.

1.2.2 Dialectical Materialism

Although Marx himself never used the term, many Marxists consider dialectical materialism as the theoretical source of several strands of Marxism. Joseph Dietzgen first used the term in 1887; however, it was only after Georgi Plekhanov - the father of Russian Marxism - used the term that it became a part of common usage in Marxian analysis.

Dialectical materialism refers to the societal and economic transformation born of material forces. Essentially, the concept of dialectical materialism suggests that all of historical growth and change results from the struggle of opposites. To put it another way, history is the creation of class struggle, i.e., the class struggle between the capitalist and landowning classes, on the one hand, and the proletariat and peasantry, on the other. Dialectical materialism or 'dialmat' follows the Hegelian principle of philosophy of history, which is the growth of thesis into anti-thesis that is sublated by synthesis. This synthesis preserves the thesis and the anti-thesis and simultaneously rises above them both.

Law of dialectics

Marxism is a fundamentally materialist philosophy because its foundation is the belief that the overall account of everything is matter which is the characteristic of reality. Another important aspect of Marxian analysis is the belief that matter is independent in forming the course of nature which detaches dialectical materialism.

NOTES

NOTES

According to Engels, 'all nature, from the smallest thing to the biggest, from a grain of sand to the sun, from the protista to man, is in a constant state of coming into being and going out of being, in a constant flux, in a ceaseless state of movement and change.' Thus, the fundamental suggestion of dialectics is that everything is in a continuous process of change, motion and development. Even when there is an appearance that no change is taking place, actually, matter is always changing. Molecules, atoms and subatomic particles are always on the move, continually changing places. Therefore, dialectics is essentially a dynamic understanding of the phenomena and processes which occur at all levels of both organic and inorganic matter.

Using Hegel's 'Science of Logic', Engels derived the three laws of dialectics. Through the laws Engels tries to respond to the problems associated with both nature and humanity. Marxian analysis uses the laws to answer queries such as:

- What is the starting point of energy or activity start in nature?
- Why does the continuous proration in the number of galaxies, solar system, planets, animals and all the realms of nature take place?
- When does the mind begin to become aware of things?
- Why is society regulated and in which direction is such regulation headed?
- Does the study of the past include an ending; if it is then what will it be?

The three laws of dialectics are as follows:

Law of opposites

Marx and Engels began with the impression that everything in reality is a combination of opposites. An illustration of this point is that electricity is made up of a positive and negative charge. Moreover, any student of science can tell you that atoms are made up of protons and electrons that are united, but essentially are opposing forces. Engels' conclusion is that everything 'contains two mutually incompatible and exclusive but nevertheless equally essential and indispensable parts or aspects'. The essential idea is that this coming together of opposites in the natural world is the trait which makes every unit auto-dynamic in nature. It also ensures a nonstop drive for movement and transformation. As Hegel stated, 'contradiction in nature is the root of all motion and of all life'.

This dichotomy more often than not exists in the natural world. In space, gravity drives every molecule to the core of a star allowing it to be held collectively, at the same time, extremely high temperatures force the molecules to stay as far away from the core as possible. If either of any of the two pulls is totally successful, the star does not survive. If extremely high temperature is reached, the star blows up into a supernova. On the other hand, a black hole or a neutron star is the result if gravitational pull is successful in pulling molecules to the core of a star. Similarly, live beings endeavour to stabilize inside and outside forces to sustain the state of homeostasis, i.e., the stabilization of contrasting powers, like acidity and alkalinity.

Law of negation

According to the law of negation, there is a predisposition in the environment towards continuously raising the numerical amount of all things. Marx and Engels state that to organize, to move forward or to replicate a superior number, creatures are inclined in the direction of negating themselves. The nature of opposing forces is such that it is inclined to negate the thing itself, at the same time this negation results in divergence in every

part and gives them movement. Consequently, creatures progress because of this energetic course of beginning and obliteration. This law can also be framed as the sequence of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

To illustrate the law of negation, Engels frequently referred to the example of the barley seed. The barley seed in the natural state sprouts (which is the death of a seed or negation) and produces a plant, which grows into ripeness. After the plant becomes ripe, it is itself negated after giving birth to barley seeds. In the social world, class also illustrates the law of negation. Historically speaking, the nobility was wiped out by the bourgeoisie revolution; this also helped create the proletariat. In Marxian analysis, this proletariat will eventually wipe out the bourgeoisie. Thus, this law suggests that every class produces its own 'gravediggers', its heirs, no sooner than it finishes laying to rest its originator.

Law of transformation

The law of transformation states that constant quantitative growth leads to changes in quality by 'leaps' in the environment, resulting in the production of a totally new variety or creature. This is the way in which 'quantitative development becomes qualitative change'. In the process of transformation, the rendering null and void of quality affecting quantity is also permitted.

This law has many similarities to the theory of evolution. Marxian analysis suggests that creatures in the course of quantitative growth are in addition essentially able to 'leap' to new appearances and stages of realism. The law is shown by the example of a volcanic eruption after the process of years of pressure building up. When the magma cools down after an eruption, it turns the unproductive land into productive land. In the social world, years of stress among contrasting classes or groups in society become the cause of an uprising. The law also occurs in reverse. For example, the introduction of better agriculture tools (changing quality) to farmland help in producing bigger amount (changing quantity) of agriculture output.

1.3 MARXIST PERSPECTIVES ON INDIAN SOCIETY

Let us now look at the different views of Marxist thinkers on Indian society.

1.3.1 Dhurjati Prasad Mukherjee

Dhurjati Prasad Mukherjee, called DP by his friends and comrades, was born in 1894 in a middle class Bengali family that had a fairly long tradition of intellectual pursuits. He is considered as one of the founding fathers of sociology in India. Mukherjee started his career at Bangabasi College, Calcutta, however, it was at Lucknow University where he established himself as a sociologist of great repute. He stayed at Lucknow University for over 30 years. He was also a visiting professor of sociology at the International Institute of Social Studies, in the Hague, for a year. After retiring from Lucknow University, he became Chair of Economics, at the University of Aligarh, a place that he occupied with great honour till the end of his academic life.

D.P. Mukherjee was a professed Marxist or 'Marxologist' as he preferred to call himself. He was interested in a wide array of subjects - from music and fine arts as peculiar creations of the Indian culture to the Indian tradition in relation to modernity. He tried to analyse Indian social history from a dialectical frame of reference. His work attempted a dialectical interpretation of the encounter between Indian tradition and

NOTES

Check Your Progress

1. According to Marx, how does a change in the relationship of production occur?
2. What constitutes the superstructure of a society?
3. What does the concept of dialectical materialism suggest?

NOTES

modernity, which unleashed many forces of cultural contradiction during the period when the British ruled India. According to Mukherjee, the encouragement of the capitalist mode of production on the indigenous Indian mode of production created mass poverty and deprivation in India. He also enquired into the role of art and culture in order to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor in India. Even though he was influenced by the Marxist school of thought, it did not diminish his interest in Indian tradition. Mukherjee advocated group action instead of rationalistic approach to life and reality.

Mukherji's dialectical approach suggested that tradition and modernity, colonialism and nationalism, individualism and collectivism could be understood as dialectically opposed to each other. All through his work he maintained that traditions are central to the understanding of Indian society. His concept of tradition appeared for the first time in 1942 when his book *Modern Indian Culture: A Sociological Study* was published. Marxism, according to D.P. Mukherjee, helped to understand the historical developments well but it could not offer a satisfactory solution to human problems. That solution was to be found in the regeneration and reinterpretation of India's national culture. In fact, he was opposed to the positivism of modern social sciences that reduced individuals to biological or psychological units. He attempted a dialectical interpretation of the encounter between the Indian tradition and modernity which unleashed many forces of cultural contradiction during the colonial era. Within the broad spectrum of the Marxist worldview and the dialectical approach, Mukherjee strove, however, to maintain the separate identity of his own views. He focused more on the historical specificity of India's cultural and social transformation which was characterized less by 'class struggle' and more by value assimilation and cultural synthesis that resulted from the encounter between tradition and modernity.

According to Mukherjee, the primary task of sociology is to understand the specific nature of the forces that sustain a particular society over the time. For this reason, he emphasized that sociologists of India must know the nature of tradition. Sociology, however, is never a defence of status quo. He asserted that 'Sociology should ultimately show the way out of the social system by analyzing the process of transformation'. Mukherji's understanding of the Indian social system has merit as it shows that the Indian society is changing but without much disintegration.

Trained as an economist, Mukherjee noted that the professional economists had failed to see the economic development in India in terms of its historical and cultural specificities. His dialecticism was rooted in humanism which cuts across narrow ethnic or national considerations. Western progress was devoid of humanism. He argued that Marxism produced an idea of a desirable and higher stage in the development of human society. In that higher stage, personality becomes integrated with others in society through a planned, socially directed, collective endeavour for historically understood end, which means a socialist order.

Expressing doubts about the success of the analysis of Indian society by the Marxists, Mukherjee argued that Indian traditional history cannot be explained in terms of class conflict because here there is a caste tradition and no such type of class relation has emerged sharply as Marxists have used to explain Indian social process.

D.P. Mukherjee did not attempt to construct a general system theory or moral philosophy for global social transformation. He used a notion of dialectics which was Marxist in formulation but still left it to individual social scientists to innovate upon its categories commensurate with their own cultural tradition. In his *Diversities* (1958),

which contains most of his theoretical papers, Mukherjee strongly argued for the use of history in social analysis. For Indian sociological practice, the notion of 'tradition' occupies an important analytic place, according to Mukherjee, because the dialectics of class formation, class conflict and the structural tension in Indian society bear the stamp of the historical contexts of its traditions and symbols. The sociological model that D.P. Mukherjee puts forward is a synthesis between Dilthey and Marx: for him, history matters in sociological analysis, the modes of production and related social relationships constitute essentials of historical forces, but its outcome is tempered also by tradition which provides these processes a specific contextuality.

D. P. Mukherjee preferred the historical-dialectical mode of sociological analysis rather than empirical-positivistic one.

NOTES

NOTES

1.3.2 A.R. Desai

One of the most prominent Marxist sociologists of India, Akshay Ramanlal Desai was born in Nadiad, Gujarat in 1915. His early years were shaped by the ideas of his father Ramanlal Vasantlal Desai, who was a well-known litterateur of the time. As a student, the younger Desai was an active part of the student movements in Baroda, Surat and Bombay. Desai attended the University of Bombay and worked on his doctoral thesis under the guidance of the sociologist G.S. Ghurye. He obtained his PhD in 1946 and married Neera Desai in 1947. Neera Desai was an academic who is considered a pioneer in the field of women studies in India. In the 1960s, Desai developed the field of political sociology in India.

A.R. Desai was deeply influenced by the Marxist school of thought which he used to understand the diverse aspects of Indian social reality. In 1969, Desai edited a volume on *Rural Sociology in India*, which was a major turning point and pacesetter in the field of agrarian studies. He also published an anthology in 1979 that included studies on peasant struggles, which had also been carried out by historians and social scientists of diverse orientations. Some of his other important works include *The Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (1948); *Slums and Urbanization of India* (1970, 1972); *State and Society in India* (1975), *India's Path of Development* (1984), and so on.

Desai closely examined the theories of Marx and Engels, as well as Trotsky, and tried to use the Marxist framework to comprehend the different aspects of the complex Indian social reality. In India, Desai is considered to be one of the forerunners in introducing the modern Marxist method to empirical investigations involving bibliographical and field research. Thus, his primary contribution to Indian sociology was his stress on the Marxist approach and his use of the dialectical method to study Indian society. Desai stated that the Marxist method helped one to raise pertinent questions, conduct researches in the correct direction, articulate adequate hypotheses, evolve proper concepts, adopt and combine suitable research techniques and locate the central tendencies of transformation with its major implications.

Desai's analysis of Indian society was radically different from other Indian sociologists. Desai rejected any interpretations of tradition with reference to religion, rituals and festivities. As a doctrinaire Marxist, for Desai, tradition was basically a secular phenomenon that originates and develops in social institutions like the family and the village. Desai also does not find the origin of tradition in western culture. He believed that the emerging contradictions in the Indian process of social transformation arose primarily from the linages between the capitalist bourgeoisie, the rural petty-bourgeoisie as well as a state apparatus that was drawn from similar social roots. As a Marxist

NOTES

thinker, property relations was the most vital relationship in his analysis of society, as well as the nature of society that he strived for. However, for Desai this approach did not 'demand a crude reducing of every phenomenon to economic factors. It does not deny the autonomy, or prevalence of distinct institutional and normative features peculiar to a particular society'.

Moreover, in his studies of nationalism, analysis of rural social structure, the nature of economic and social policies of change in India and the structure of the state and society, Desai tried to expose the contradictions and anomalies in policies and process of change resulting from the capitalistic – bourgeoisie interlocking of interest in Indian society. According to Desai, the polarization of class interests, especially of the bourgeoisie in India, is the foundation of modern society in India. It is thus inherent in the class contradictions and the logic of its dialectics. This class contradiction has been thoroughly examined by Desai in several of his writings.

Desai applied market methods in his treatment of Indian social structure and its processes. In his books introduction to *Rural Sociology in India* Desai suggests that he makes explicit use of the historical–systematic and Marxist methods of analysis for the understanding of rural society and its problems. He also refers to the contribution of a few American sociologists who contributed to the systematic methodology for the study of the rural and urban phenomena. The central thrust of his analysis of agrarian society was to suggest how the state transformed the agrarian structure from pre-capitalist to capitalist relationships. This occurred as a result of state intervention through various legislations and developmental programmes. As he stated, 'the overall thrust of the agrarian policy of the rulers has been to eliminate parasitic, absentee intermediaries in the form of various categories of zamindars and absentee landlords and to create in their place classes of agricultural capitalists, rich farmers and viable middle proprietors directly linked to the state'. Desai believes that the consequence of these policies is that sharp differentiations have taken place among the peasant class, and the condition of small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers has deteriorated.

Check Your Progress

4. What does D.P. Mukerji's dialectical approach suggest?
5. According to D.P. Mukherjee, what is the primary task of sociology?
6. How has evolution helped differentiate man from animals?
7. What is R.K. Mukerjee's argument in his work *Community and Society in India*?
8. What is R.K. Mukerjee's meaning of ethics?
9. According to R.K. Mukherjee, what are the chief reasons why institutional fallacy persists?
10. What does A.R. Desai believe is the foundation of modern society in India?

NOTES

1.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The noted sociologist and philosopher, Karl Marx gave the most important theory to show how the economy was a major factor in social change.
- Marx explained that economy constitutes the basic structure of society. This basic structure consists of the means of production (raw material, labour, machines and so on.) and the relationship of production.
- Change in the means and relationship of production, consequently, leads to the change in various institutions, i.e., in the superstructure of society. This change in the relationship of production occurs as a result of a conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed class, the haves and the have-nots, the ruling and the ruled class.
- Many Marxists considered dialectical materialism as the theoretical source of several strands of Marxism. Marx never used the term dialectical materialism which refers to the societal and economic transformation born of the material forces.
- Marxism is a fundamentally materialist philosophy because the foundation of it is the belief that the overall account of everything is matter which is characteristic of reality. If empirical study is able to identify the whole aspects of matter, therefore, matter is accepted as the beginning and ending of all reality.
- Marxism believes that everything 'contains two mutually incompatible and exclusive but nevertheless equally essential and indispensable parts or aspects'. The essential idea is that this union of opposites in natural world is the feature which makes every unit auto-dynamic in nature along with ensuring a continuous drive for movement and transformation.

Check Your Progress

11. In Marxian analysis, what does the mode of production comprise of?
12. What does Kosambi mean by feudalism from above?

NOTES

- The law of negation was formed to explain this predisposition of natural world. Accordingly, Marx and Engels state that to organize to move forward or replicate a superior number, creatures are inclined in the direction of negating themselves.
- The law of transformation states that constant quantitative growth leads to changes in quality by 'leaps' in the environment, resulting in production of a totally new variety or creature. This is the way in which 'quantitative development becomes qualitative change'.
- D.P. Mukherjee, a professed Marxist or 'Marxologist' as he preferred to call himself, analysed Indian social history from a dialectical frame of reference.
- According to Mukherjee, the encouragement of the capitalist mode of production on the indigenous Indian mode of production created mass poverty and deprivation in India.
- Mukerji's dialectical approach suggested that tradition and modernity, colonialism and nationalism, individualism and collectivism could be understood as dialectically opposed to each other.
- D. P. Mukherjee preferred the historical-dialectical mode of sociological analysis rather than empirical-positivistic one.
- R.K. Mukherjee considered the question of value as an important aspect of sociology. He also argued that social science gives us knowledge and if we employ this knowledge for the betterment of man, then definitely one must create a value. His basic sociological ambition was to work for a better social order.
- R.K. Mukherjee promotes studying the development of human civilization through the study of biological evolution, spiritual and universal dimensions.
- R.K. Mukherjee maintained that society is 'the sum of structures and functions through which man orients himself to the three dimensions or levels of his environment'. These three levels are moral, psycho-social and ecological. Thus, society 'fulfils the basic requirements of sustenance, status and value fulfilment.'
- One of the most prominent Marxist sociologists of India, Akshay Ramanlal Desai was born in Nadiad, Gujarat in 1915.
- Desai's analysis of Indian society was radically different from other Indian sociologists. Desai rejected any interpretations of tradition with reference to religion, rituals and festivities.
- As a doctrinaire Marxist, for Desai, tradition was basically a secular phenomenon that originates and develops in social institutions like the family and the village.
- The mode of production is a core element of the Marxist account of history. In his historical materialism, Karl Marx saw the history of development in five distinct phases that are characterized by dominant mode of production.
- For Marx, the mode of production is comprised of the productive forces and the relations of production. These two interact and influence each other, and both develop in the course of the historical development of society.
- The Marxist analysis of the transition from feudalism to capitalism generated substantial interest in Indian academia, particularly among Marxist scholars.
- Damodar Dharmananda Kosambi was born in Portuguese held Goa in 1907.

NOTES

- Kosambi is known for being a Marxist historian who specialised in ancient India. Kosambi utilized the historical materialist approach in his work. In fact, he is considered to be the 'patriarch of the Marxist school of Indian historiography'.
- Kosambi's analysis of Indian history helped established that Indian society also had its own history and its own stages of development and made social change the basis of periodisation of Indian history.
- In his *Introduction to the study of Indian History*, Kosambi propounded the concept of feudalism from above and feudalism from below and also compared the Indian and European system.

1.5 KEY TERMS

- **Bourgeoisie:** In Marxist contexts, it refers to the capitalist class who own most of society's wealth and means of production.
- **Historical materialism:** Historical materialism is a methodological approach to the study of human societies and their development over time first articulated by Karl Marx as the materialist conception of history
- **Dialectical materialism:** It is a Marxist that suggests that political and historical events result from the conflict of social forces and are interpretable as a series of contradictions and their solutions. The conflict is seen as caused by material needs
- **Diamat:** Diamat was a social theory coined by the 19th century philosopher Joseph Dietzgen. It emphasized commodities and the effects of their exchange over time. 'Diamat' is based upon three dialectical laws: 1. the identity of opposites; 2. the transition from quantity to quality; 3. the negation of negation. Joseph Stalin formulated the 'Soviet Philosophy of Diamat' and called it a 'proletarian conception of the world'. The basic idea of diamat is that every economic order grows to a state of maximum efficiency, while at the same time developing internal contradictions or weaknesses that contribute to its decay.
- **Proletariat:** It refers to working-class people regarded collectively; it is often used with reference to Marxism.

1.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. According to Marx, a change in the relationship of production occurs as a result of a conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed class, the haves and the have-nots, the ruling and the ruled class.
2. Institutions like the family, education, religion, polity, and so on, constitute the superstructure.
3. The concept of dialectical materialism suggests that all historical growth and change results from the struggle of opposites. To put it another way, history is the creation of class struggle, i.e., the class struggle between the capitalist and landowning classes, on the one hand, and the proletariat and peasantry, on the other.

NOTES

4. Dialectical approach suggested that tradition and modernity, colonialism and nationalism, individualism and collectivism could be understood as dialectically opposed to each other.
5. According to Mukherjee, the primary task of sociology is to understand the specific nature of the forces that sustain a particular society over the time.
6. Evolution has helped man form better and complex societies, in which they decide and control the environment. Animals, on the other hand, have limitations in their ability to affect and change the environment.
7. In R.K. Mukherjee work *Community and Society in India*, published in 1979, he argued that the true place of values in human life and progress can be understood only when we consider the natural history of value.
8. Ethics for man should be naturalistic, or based on scientific grounding itself and not on blind and rigid conformity to institutional values, but value-preferences, based on different social consequences of human behaviour, stemming from different alternative and complementary sets of institutional values regarded as social facts.
9. The chief reasons why the institutional fallacy persists in all societies are the institutional determination of his attitudes and social actions and relations and his rationalization in respect to his own behaviour and institutional standards that saves him from psychic conflicts.
10. According to Desai, the polarization of class interests, especially of the bourgeoisie in India, is the foundation of modern society in India.
11. In Marxian analysis, the mode of production is comprised of the productive forces and the relations of production. These two interact and influence each other, and both develop in the course of the historical development of society.
12. According to Kosambi, feudalism from above meant a state where an emperor or a powerful king levied tributes on his subordinates, who did what they liked within their own territories as long as they paid the paramount ruler. These subordinate rulers might even have been tribal chiefs who once ruled the land by direct administration without the intermediary of a class which was in effect a part of the land owning strata.

1.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the three laws of dialectics?
2. Write a short note on the Marxist critique of the concept of dialectical materialism.
3. What are the three levels of man's environment according to R.K. Mukherjee?
4. Discuss A.R. Desai's interpretation of tradition.
5. What do you think of Radha Kamal Mukerjee's opinion about values?
6. How does D.D. Kosambi analyse feudalism in India?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the Marxist theory of social change.
2. Examine the Marxist concept of dialectical materialism.
3. D.P. Mukherjee emphasized that sociologists of India must know the nature of tradition. Discuss.
4. What is the basic approach viewed by Radha Kamal Mukherjee to explain Indian society?
5. R.K Mukherjee promotes studying the development of human civilization through the study of biological evolution, spiritual and universal dimensions. Discuss.
6. Describe how Marx describes the origin of capitalism.

1.8 FURTHER READING

- Mukherjee, D.P. 1958. *Diversities: Essays in Economics, Sociology and Other Social Problems*. Delhi: Popular Publishing House.
- Mukherjee, R.K. 1965. *The Sociologist and Social Change in India Today*. Delhi: Prentice Hall of India.
- Calhoun, Craig J. 2002. *Classical Sociological Theory*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Abraham, Francis M. and John Henry Morgan. 1985. *Sociological Thought*. Chennai: Macmillan India.
- Aron, Raymond. 1965. *Main Currents in Sociological Thought, Vol. I and II*. Middlesex: Penguin Books.

NOTES

UNIT 2 MARXIST PERSPECTIVES

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 Marxist Perspectives on Indian Society
- 2.3.1 R.K. Mukherjee
- 2.3 Marxian Analysis on the Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism
- 2.3.1 DD. Kosambi
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 Key Terms
- 2.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.7 Questions and Exercises
- 2.8 Further Reading

NOTES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learned about structural-functional perspectives of the theorists M.N. Srinivas and S.C. Dube. In this unit, the discussion will turn to the Marxist perspective.

As a student of sociology, you must have heard the name of Karl Marx. The thoughts of this philosopher and revolutionary had a huge impact on the history of the twentieth century; in fact his writings continue to influence thinkers of political science, sociology, economy, history, and so on, to this day. Despite his political orientation towards the creation of a communist society, Marx devoted much of his writings to the dialectical and critical analyses of capitalist society. The dialectic emphasizes that among the elements and critical analyses of capitalist society. The dialectic emphasizes that among the elements of social world there are no simple cause and effect relationships; fact and value are not seemingly divided clearly between a line; there are no hard and fast dividing lines among phenomena in the social world. Marx's analysis of actors and structure should be viewed in the framework of his opinions on human nature, which is also the starting point for his critical analysis of the contradictions inherent within the capitalist structure. Marx stated that a disagreement exists between our human nature and work in the capitalist system. Workers get alienated from their labour because it does not belong to them, but rather to the capitalist owners.

Marx's theories and opinions were a response to the quick changes taking place in Europe, primarily Germany, as a result of industrialization. He also studied the nature of the structures of capitalism and their adverse effects on the actors and elaborated on the pivotal role played by commodities in capitalism. He used the term 'reification' to explain the process whereby social structure becomes naturalised, absolute and independent of human action. In this context, it can be said that capital is the most reified component in a capitalist society. Using the framework enumerated by Marx, and expanded by other Marxist philosophers, this unit will discuss the perspective of Indian Marxist thinkers like R.K. Mukherjee, A.R. Desai, D.P. Mukherjee and D.D. Kosambi.

2.2 UNIT OBJECTIVES

NOTES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe A.R. Desai's interpretation of tradition
- Explain R.K. Mukerjee's opinion about values
- Discuss D.D. Kosambi's analysis of feudalism in India
- Examine the Marxist concept of dialectical materialism
- Discuss D.P. Mukherjee notions of the nature of tradition

2.3 MARKXIST PERSPECTIVES ON INDIAN SOCIETY

R.K. Mukherjee

Radha Kamal Mukherjee was born in a Bengali Brahmin family in Berhampur, West Bengal in 1889. He completed his education from Presidency College, Calcutta (now Kolkata). He is considered one of the pioneers of Indian sociological theories. R.K. Mukherjee has contributed in areas such as:

- General theory of society
- Developing interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary approach to studying society
- Sociology of values/social structure of values
- Social ecology and regional sociology

Mukherjee considered the question of value as an important aspect of sociology. He also argued that social science gives us knowledge and if we employ this knowledge for the betterment of man, then definitely one must create value. His basic sociological ambition was to work for a better social order. Mukerjee's basic sociological idea was to develop a general theory of society. He proposed a few measures so that a borderless society can be formed. He advised sociologists to break the obstructions between physical and social sciences; to avoid distinction between social and psychological aspects; to encourage continuous exchange of ideas among the social sciences and between the social and physical sciences. These measures will help human personality to better interact with the surrounding social environment. He discouraged specialization and compartmentalization within disciplines as they provide a parochial view of man's social behaviour.

R.K. Mukherjee had emphasized an interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary approach to study and comprehend human life. This was the fundamental reason for the development of this general theory of society. In a further analysis of the general theory of society, he explains the value of a universal civilization. He maintains that civilization is the bigger picture, of which culture is a part. He promotes studying the development of human civilization through the study of biological evolution, spiritual and universal dimensions. Let us discuss his views in detail.

(i) Biological evolution

Evolution has helped man form better and complex societies, in which they decide and control the environment. Animals, on the other hand, have limitations in their ability to affect and change the environment. Humans are able to rise above conflicts and strife and attain cooperation to achieve higher goals in life and resultant social change.

NOTES

(ii) Universalization

Within the realm of social psychology, people are classified according to their race, ethnicity and nation. Humans are often thought of as slaves to their egos. All their actions are meant to achieve their own selfish interests. However, Mukherjee maintained that human beings have the potential to achieve universalization and forget their petty interests for the common good. This would help people to connect to others over a collective perspective. One may start looking at oneself as a member of a nation. Ethical relativism, according to Mukherjee, does not have relevance in our present times. Ethical relevance is the difference of values among societies. Instead, human beings should vie for ethical universalism that helps maintain unity among the human beings. Under ethical universalism, people feel free to disregard rules and norms created for attainment of parochial individual interests.

(iii) Spiritual dimension

Mukherjee maintained that there is a spiritual angle to civilization. Human beings have always moved up the ladder of spirituality by overcoming material and physical limitations. He commended Indian and Chinese civilizations as these have managed to become and remain stable since the 6th century BC. These civilizations have thrived in the face of adversity as their values help nurture their quest for spiritualism.

In his work *Community and Society in India*, published in 1979, he argued that the true place of values in human life and progress can be understood only when we consider the natural history of value. Thus, the psychological function of values lies in orienting and directing the behaviour and evolution of animals capable of mental construction and experience, that is, value creation and communication. Values as adaptive mechanisms play a significant evolutionary role in life, mind and cosmos. In his argument, Mukherjee asserts that social sciences, which are the proper study of mankind, cannot do without a consideration of values. This is, however, completely disregarded by the social sciences governed by subjectivism, phenomenalism and physicalist assumptions and procedures. The latter help bring about a complete separation of the social sciences from one another and an unwarranted neglect of the unity and wholeness of man and his value experience. The discredit of human values and value-scale, the divorce between human ideals and norms and social action and policy and rigid, watertight demarcation between the social sciences constitute together a crisis in the modern knowledge of man and society.

The theoretical framework for the study of mankind should be such that the nexus of valuation can restore the general unity of the social sciences now concerned with the various aspects of his impulses, behaviour and strivings. The present divided treatment of social phenomena by the different social sciences with their independent, non-interacting fields go against the human experience, to put it another way, human impulses and values interact and cannot be dealt with in isolation. Hopefully, there is a trend today towards the discovery of the unity of knowledge. The unity of the social sciences comprises a common core of meanings and values based on an interchange and coordination of the fundamental nations and methods of the various social studies dealing with man, his behaviour and culture. The interdisciplinary approach in social analysis affords the highest promise not only for the unification of the social sciences but also for the clarification of universal values for all mankind.

NOTES

Social science and ethical values

Rationality, Mukherjee argues, in individual behaviour or intelligence in the social world, selects and consciously strives for more enduring and harmonious universal values. In fact, mankind not only seeks various relatively stable or institutionalized values, but is always conscious of a universal scale or hierarchy of value. The definition or selection of institutionalized values and the description of social relations and behaviour pattern for their attainment are the concerns of the various social sciences. Each social science is concerned with an appraisal of the effectiveness of behaviour patterns in creating, maintaining and developing values. So, family structure for the sociologist, governmental structure for the political scientist, economic organization for the economist and the structure of law for the jurist are treated by the social scientist as objective data. The social scientist does not pass judgment on institutionalized values, but must take them as given; he may then analyse their efforts on social behaviour, and thus treat these values as cause of social behaviour.

He also argued that social scientific inquiries must, obviously, be concerned with the social consequences of human behaviour which is the result of moral decisions made by individuals. According to Mukherjee, the social sciences are not only concerned with values as they are presented in established institutions of society, but also with human choice and evaluation of moral alternatives, i.e., with ethics. Ethics for man should be naturalistic, or based on scientific grounding itself and not on blind and rigid conformity to institutional values, but value-preferences, based on different social consequences of human behaviour, stemming from different alternative and complementary sets of institutional values regarded as social facts. Ethics implies intelligent and far-sighted appraisal of psychological and social facts that are enmeshed with values and value judgments. In a sense, judgments of social facts and institutions and moral judgments do not logically exclude each other. Ethics, in the second place, are universalist and transcendent, embodying universal values for all mankind. Human history reveals an overall trend of universality in social and moral development, realizing an unlimited, forward oriented unity and wholeness of mankind.

In his work *Institutional Theory of Economics*, Mukherjee argued that Indian economy is following the model of Western economics. This model does not take into account the prevalent caste system in banking, handicrafts and local businesses. Western economics stresses mostly on industrial centres and economic markets. Mukherjee's argument was that in an ancient civilization like India, ignoring caste frameworks within the social structure is actually not advisable. He also argued that in India, economic exchange is influenced by traditional networks. The various castes and guilds in this country have been operating in an environment of mutual cooperation and harmony in the economic market. He argued that the economic values of India should be understood with reference to the existing social norms.

While discussing social ecology, he maintained that this discipline needs to be studied along with various other social sciences. The ecological aspect is composed, primarily, of geographical, geological and biological factors that work hand-in-hand. The ecology of a society is also influenced by its political, social and economic perspectives. Thus, ecology may be defined as the study of the interactions of various aspects of man and his environment. According to Mukherjee, the scope of human ecology as explained in his book *Regional Sociology* are 'a synoptic study of the balance of plant, animal and human communities, which are systems of correlated working part in the organization of the region'. The ecological relations of the lower animals are very similar to that of the

NOTES

human beings. However, culture plays a vital role in case of man. While studying human ecology, examining regional influence, varied social habits, traditions and values is important. The intricate interactions between man and the region he resides in is dealt with by social ecology. The growth in ecological regions depend on the residents' response to it and the challenges that the environment poses.

Regional basis of values and symbols

R.K. Mukherjee maintained that society is 'the sum of structures and functions through which man orients himself to the three dimensions or levels of his environment'. These three levels are moral, psycho-social and ecological. Thus, society 'fulfils the basic requirements of sustenance, status and value fulfilment.' Socially accepted goals or desires that are adopted by individuals through socialization and conditioning are known as values. Values create set standards, aspirations and preferences in a social system. The basic concept of value cuts across desires, goals, ideals and norms. Values help man to channel his desires and goals towards a specific direction. Man can thus fight his physical desires and inner conflicts and choose the correct path. By following the path of values, individual actors successfully achieve peaceful coexistence with fellow humans. The fundamental issue in modern societies is to make and maintain values that would be followed by all members of the society. Values should have a two-fold object: to lead to holistic development of human individuality and nurture solidarity and harmony among the members.

The West developed the ideology of metaphysical individualism. However, this ideology makes man isolated from his group and dissects only his needs and preferences. Social sciences have generally ignored the human values that are shared by human beings and have, instead, focused only on those that were competitive. These sciences have also ignored the integral nature of these values that accelerate development of social culture. These parochial divisions create an artificial divide between practical sociology and metaphysics and ethics. While values are the core subject of the study of ethics, empirical/practical sociology examines social structure and function. The difference between these two has been promoted by Western social sciences. Mukherjee propounds the existence of a gradation of values while talking about theorization of sociology. This gradation is noticed on four levels of social integration.

Certain economic values like integrity, reciprocity, consideration, fairness, and so on, may be exhibited in the economic circle. Within society, justice and equity need to be shown among members. Solidarity, cooperation, unconditional and natural love and social responsibility are the basic social values that must be displayed within a social structure. These values are required if the world society needs to be reconstructed.

Mukherjee has pronounced the existence of disvalues to be associated with values. Both social shortcomings and individual lags are responsible for the expression of disvalues. Individuals as well as institutions can show these disvalues too; for example criminals or organized criminal activities. He contends that ethics have a global existence in his work *Dynamics of Moral and Dimensions of Human Evolution*. In order to attain universal brotherhood, man must rise above petty selfish interests. In this world of violence and discords, this is absolutely essential.

Conservation and synthesis of values and ideals by institution

In Mukerjee's work, difference between groups, traditions, and institutions have been portrayed as a nuclei of the major values. He argued that man, as he is physically

NOTES

endowed and a social being, seeks values not singly but collectively. He forms groups and institutions that represent methods and mechanisms for the satisfaction, promotion and transmission of values. Every basic interest and value of mankind constitutes the nucleus of formation of groups and institutions. Groups grow from individuals, cohere together for the satisfaction of the basic values; while the mass of institutions is called into being for standardizing, organizing and directing group relationships and activities for the satisfaction and fostering of these values. Groups are episodes in man's adaptation emerging out of the ordering and fulfilment of specific human values that become the common ends or goals of the associated individuals.

As the system of values becomes stable and continuous, groups crystallize into institutions by which we understand social relationships, attitudes, and habits that are more or less enduring and have obtained social approval. Institutions, accordingly, represent the more definite, formal, and sanctioned social relationships and behaviours; the more stable integrations of both values and adaptation techniques that provide the standardized ideas, attitudes, and purposive controls for the fulfilment and promotion of values. He also argues that institutions are embodiments of the major values of man and society. They give definition and meaning to values for the individual who can mature his self only insofar as he can reflect these in his social activities and relationships. It is in this manner that values become a part of the structure of man's developed and organized self.

Groups may be temporary and group values may be shifting, but in so far as groups develop into institutions, group values are tested, renewed, and consolidated by the experience of generations. Institutions combine the results of deliberation, memory, organization, and judgment on individual and social experience for generations and thus generate ideal values. Such ideal values of institutions outlast the lives of both individuals and groups; while at the same time may be infinitely enriched by the contributions of the latter. Values are defined by institutions in a broad and general manner leaving ample scope for the variety and flexibility of individual strivings and behaviour. The mind of the socially fashioned individual constantly recreates and modifies the pattern of social values in terms of the self. Institutional values are also systematically assisted in their fulfilment in daily life by the fixation and elaboration of means and programmes, conventions, habits, morals, and schemes of action for the individual involving specific rights and duties according to his role, position, and status.

Man's interests, values, and ideals are made definite and permanent as his duties in life, and character stabilize by finding his role and position in institutional life. Man can enter into and fully participate in the totality of values, both concrete and ideal, of a society and culture only in and through institutions that are embodiments of social experience of generations guiding man in his evolutionary advance. This is the biological significance of institutions. Concretely, institutions are the agencies for the fulfilment of the essential and universal biological values, such as food, marriage, family, and protection, economic values such as wealth, property, standard of living and security, social values such as status, honour, and prestige, and spiritual values, such as aesthetic appreciation, knowledge, and security amidst the uncertain and the inexplicable. It is because man can fulfil and foster values mainly through the instrumentality of institutions that these possess authority and sanctity.

Mukherjee also emphasized that human values are derived social values. He argued that man is mentally so constituted that his major urges and desires blend with one another and with his social dispositions. Thus, most values integrate desires and

NOTES

interests at different levels with social urges. Human values are essentially social products. These can be satisfied only in and through man's groups and institutions. The values that groups and institutions fulfil do not represent egocentric primary desires in the raw, such as food, sex, and aggression but are secondary or derived values. Institutions stand for a certain discipline and control of man's primitive impulses and desires, a certain degree of socialization that transforms his blind, explosive, and disruptive urges into large and stable interests and values. It is not mere sexual values that create the institutions of family and marriage institutions. Sexual and parental desires, hunger and food, play and repose, all intermingle in the composite secondary values of the family that also extend into and overlap, due to the interplay of the social impulses, with the values of kinship.

Similarly, economic values are secondary and derived values, not to be attributed to the operation of single primary drives like food-getting, appropriation and possession, curiosity or constructiveness. All these mingle together and also mingle with the social impulses in combinations that vary and that are often difficult to trace, comprising the permanent derivative economic values of economic adequacy and standard of living, security, and power. Similarly, man's primary tendencies of aggression and sympathy, dominance and subordination merge together for fashioning the derivative social values of status and prestige. Here also institutions embody large and universal derived values. Finally, in the case of the values connected with the aesthetic, religious, and ecclesiastical institutions, it is even more difficult to single out the threads which connect them with the elemental urges of human nature. Such institutions are integrations and ordered expressions of the impulses of play, creation, assertion, and gregariousness, but in the imaginative values arising out of the harmonies of sound, colour, matter, and movement as in art and in those arising out of man's ordered relationships with the unknown and the bewildering, these elemental human satisfactions are very much in the background.

Mukherjee also argues that human values involve orderly relationships of persons and objects. All institutions, accordingly, give fulfilment to secondary or derived values in which some definite ordering or integration of the primary urges and interests is implied for the sake of their durable satisfaction in man's social setting. By blending, by ordering, satisfactions and values become relatively stable. On the other hand, the same process involves orderly relationships of persons and objects.

Underlying the institution of the family are both the integration of sex with food-getting, parental, and social urges and the idea of ordered relations of the sexes and the family groups. In wealth, property and other economic institutions, we have the pattern of fundamental human urges such as those of food-getting, appropriation, possession, aggression, and constructiveness mingled in different combinations, and with the notion of orderly economic relationships and transactions by the regulation of competition and cooperation and of ownership or control of material resources and implements of production and distribution and exchange.

In status, there are similarly a definite integration and combination of the impulses of aggression and sympathy, dominance and submission as well as the notion of systematic distribution of social rank, power, and prestige relationships. Every institution stereotypes values and sentiments and standardizes forms of social relationship and activity. In other words, the institutional values are the only values, the institutional relations the only legitimate relations, and the institutional ways of action the moral ways in society. Thus arises what is called the institutional fallacy according to which man hides his conscience behind the institutional feelings, beliefs, and habits.

NOTES

The chief reasons why the institutional fallacy persists in all societies are the institutional determination of his attitudes and social actions and relations and his rationalization in respect to his own behaviour and institutional standards that saves him from psychic conflicts. Due to the chronic antagonism between individual wishes or scale of preferences and institutional values, he sometimes adores and condemns, extols and decries the institution. For there is no escape for the average man from the institution, since he finds reward, convenience, security and self-status in institutional conformity. On the other hand, the institution lays down norms and standards only in a general manner permitting some amount of divergence of individual behaviour and mode of fulfilment of values.

Institutions derive their stability from integration of biological, social, and ideal values. Man's values are concentrated and integrated in institutions, as these become his goals, lead him away from the mere physical values that are disapproved and come under various taboos and prohibitions in life and society. The familial values standardize and stabilize the desires and satisfactions of sex that no longer run the tumultuous course of brutal lust. The biological, the economic, the social, and the ideal values fuse and interpenetrate. The result is that even such an explosive and disruptive impulse like sex, which also constantly changes in its aim and direction, develops into a deep, stable, and tender attachment that becomes the seat of realization of many ideal values.

In economic and social values, which are ordered and guaranteed by economic and social institutions, the values that are fixed in the minds of people and determine their goals and activities grow out of primary and universal urges as well, but the biological urges and values are here hardly recognizable. Hunger, the desires for appropriation and possession, curiosity and constructiveness are hardly manifest in the vast complex economic apparatus providing for the production, acquisition, and distribution of food and other necessary economic goods and services that ensure economic sufficiency; yet these original impulses furnish the drives for the newly fashioned, derived economic values of standard of living, wealth, property, and economic power mingling as they do now with the social impulses and the interests of social order, security, and well-being.

Man's social values are even more varied and complex; woven as these are by threads of various kinds and grades of urges and satisfactions. Among the most important of these are gregariousness, sympathy, protection, dominance, and submission, which are, however, not found in the raw but blend and integrate with one another and with the various types of biological as well as ideal values. The process of valuation, then, is undoubtedly the work of man's groups and institutions that create derived or secondary values through:

- (i) the ordering and integration of the biological, the social, and the ideal satisfactions in each case, thereby giving values both intensity and stability.
- (ii) through the ordering and standardization of the activities and relationships of the persons and groups concerned.

Institutional values lose their stability and unity, and disintegrate, contributing also to the break-up of the solidarity of the group, as the biological, the social, and the ideal phases of satisfaction fail to cohere or dissociate. The familial values lapse and the family group sunders as a result of brutal lust and aggression unchecked by the social impulses or any ideal satisfactions. On the other hand, where the sex impulses, home-making, and other interests cannot obtain adequate fulfilment due to the dominance of economic values and the desire to maintain an artificial standard of living for the class as

NOTES

an economic goal, there is a similar dissociation of the familial values. Economic values lapse at the time of an extreme food crisis or famine due to the magnification of the hunger impulse among the famine-stricken mass that excitedly hunt for and seize food, unmindful of social and even familial relationships and obligations. These are extreme instances of the pursuit of mere biological values to the exclusion of the social and ideal values, spelling social unsettlement and disruption. The solidarity of society depends upon the network of institutional values surrounding human life and behaviour and fixing in human minds social habits or ways of living in which biological values no longer fulfil themselves in brutal egocentric satisfactions but coalesce with the social and the ideal values. Man's social advance is possible only on the foundation of relatively fixed habits, attitudes and ways of living that make his choice of subordination of lower to higher values easy and automatic involving scarcely any mental effort.

NOTES

2.4 MARXIAN ANALYSIS ON THE TRANSITION FROM FEUDALISM TO CAPITALISM

The mode of production is a core element of the Marxist account of history. In his historical materialism, Karl Marx saw the history of development in five distinct phases that are characterized by dominant mode of production. The mode of production is that are characterized by dominant mode of production. The mode of production is comprised of the productive forces and the relations of production. These two interact and influence each other, and both develop in the course of the historical development of society. In Marxian dialectics, the mode of production is also called the Epoch or Era. The productive forces are always changing, for people are constantly improving the instrument of labour and accumulating diverse experiences in the process of production. A specific level of development of the productive forces requires corresponding relations of production. This is sometimes also described as the economic law, discovered by Marx, which says that the relations of production correspond to the character and level of development of the productive forces. Thus, the concept of the mode of production provides the economic basis of social relations. In *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* Marx wrote:

In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of

Check Your Progress

4. What does D.P. Mukerji's dialectical approach suggest?
5. According to D.P. Mukherjee, what is the primary task of sociology?
6. How has evolution helped differentiate man from animals?
7. What is R.K. Mukerjee's argument in his work *Community and Society in India*?
8. What is R.K. Mukerjee's meaning of ethics?
9. According to R.K. Mukherjee, what are the chief reasons why institutional fallacy persists?
10. What does A.R. Desai believe is the foundation of modern society in India?

NOTES

production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production, or what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production, these relations turn into their fetters...then comes the period of social revolution.

The concept of the mode of production has been matter of fiery debate amongst scholars. The scholars who have further elaborated this concept include Engels, Mao Zedong, Gramsci, Raul Prebisch and Celso Furtado. Joseph Stalin delineated and defined dialectical and historical materialism as the world outlook of Marxism-Leninism and as a method to study society and its history through his philosophy of 'diamat'. Antonio Gramsci proposed a 'philosophy of praxis'. Mao Zedong, in his essay *On Contradiction*, rejected Engels' 'laws of dialectics' as oversimplified and insisted on the complexity of contradiction. Mao's text inspired Louis Althusser's work on contradiction, which was a driving theme in his well-known essay *For Marx*. Althusser attempted to nuance the Marxist concept of contradiction by borrowing the concept of 'over-determination' from psychoanalysis. He criticized the Stalinist 'teleological' reading of Marx as a return to Hegel's idealism in which philosophy superseded reality. Another school of thought, led by Italian philosopher Ludovico Geymonat, constructed a 'historical epistemology' from dialectical materialism. Thus we see that there are various interpretations of dialectical materialism which lead to further debates on the mode of production.

Marx on the Origin of Capitalism

Through his 'historical materialism', Karl Marx provides a detailed analysis of the genesis of the capitalist mode of production, its internal working and its future evolution. Marx presented his thoughts on the emergence of capitalism in an essay entitled *The Origins and Development of Capitalism*. For Marx, as a direct consequence of the discovery, colonization and exploitation of the Americas, and the development of maritime trade with the East Indies and China, the 16th and 17th century were periods of intense capital accumulation. As a result, contrasting with the feudalism that preceded it, a process in the development of commercial capitalism began. Such a process resulted in the rise of a new class within medieval European society, i.e., the capitalist class. Marx termed the class as the bourgeoisie.

According to Marx, the feudal mode of production consisted of landowners, peasantry and middle level of artisans. Artisans were organized into craft guilds, with entire towns often dedicated to the one craft. Thus, the division of labour was across various specialized guilds. The social relations between peasants and landowners, apprentices and masters, etc., was of a hierarchical patron-client type relationship, with the patron providing protection and sustenance to their client, in return for the dedicated service and loyalty of that client. Marx argued that the emergence of commercial capitalism consequently led to the development of a merchant class. The merchant class' increasing power challenged the existing ruling class, the land-owning feudal lords, and also the social order underpinning it. For Marx, from the beginning, two types of producers emerged—the revolutionary merchant whose production mode was in opposition to the craft guilds and agrarian economy, and the transitional merchant, who continued to maintain direct possession of production through bringing independent

NOTES

craftsmen under his control, but not disenfranchising them from the means of production. According to Marx, such transitional merchants were obstacles to the real capitalist mode of production, and it was just a matter of time before they disappeared.

The change from feudal exploitation to capitalist exploitation involved a drastic shift in the servitude of the peasant-labourer, and importantly, the separation of the labourer from the soil. The expansion of world trade as a consequence of European advance into the Americas and East Asia prompted the emerging capitalist mode of production, and led to a corresponding increase in the need for trade goods. The feudalistic modes of production and social class relationships that existed in Europe hampered the production of such trade goods. To meet the demand for trade goods, the mode through which such products were produced needed to improve. This necessarily involved changing the relationship between the product and the producer. Under feudalism, the landlord would take a portion of the harvest from the peasant population under his control. The peasants themselves remained in contact with the means of production. On the other hand, capitalist exploitation required that the labourer be separated – or alienated – from the means of production, becoming a 'free' labourer; free to be exploited as a wage labourer, rather than as a chattel of the feudal lord. Thus the existing feudal relationships needed to be broken down in order to produce a pool of free labourers that capitalists could exploit under the new modes of production. For Marx, such a change in the nature of the servitude was a progression, abolishing as it did serfdom, and creating the free labourer who was not bound to the economic structure of feudal society.

Along with this change of the mode of production from feudal to capitalist, was the change in the nature of the product. Products became commodities under the capitalist mode of production – products did not just have a use value, but an exchange value as well – in fact products were produced especially as exchange goods, i.e., trade goods. The use value of the product becomes incidental to and separate from its value as a trade good. Commodity production could only occur using the capitalist means of production, isolating the worker as a supplier of commodity labour. According to Marx, the capitalist mode of production was 'an epoch-making mode of exploitation' through 'its organization of labour and its stupendous technical progress.' Thus, all nations would be induced to adopt the bourgeois mode of production by the productive forces emerging out of the industrial revolution.

Thus for Marx, capitalism was a mode of production that uniquely combined private ownership of the means of production, commodity production with profit principle and a competitive, dynamic and expanding market. Marx admired capitalism as a superior economic system than feudalism because it could overcome basic human needs. Importantly, Marx viewed capitalism as a historical inevitability. However, Marx's ideas of 'alienation' and 'surplus value' saw inherent contradictions in the capitalist mode of production which would lead to the intensification of class struggle and ultimately would result in the fall of the capitalist mode of production itself.

2.4. D.D. Kosambi

Damodar Dharmananda Kosambi was born in Portuguese held Goa in 1907. His father was a scholar who had studied ancient Indian texts with a particular emphasis on Buddhism and its literature in the Pali language. Kosambi emulated his father by developing an intense interest in the ancient history of India. He left India for the United States when he was young and graduated from Harvard University in 1929. In the United States, he excelled in the field of mathematics having studied under the American mathematician George David Birkhoff. After graduating from Harvard, Kosambi came back to India

and taught mathematics in Benaras Hindu University and Ferguson College. He also taught mathematics at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR). He died in 1966 and was posthumously awarded the Hari Om Ashram Award by the University Grant Commission in 1980.

NOTES

Kosambi is known for being a Marxist historian who specialised in ancient India. Kosambi utilized the historical materialist approach in his work. In fact, he is considered to be the 'patriarch of the Marxist school of Indian historiography'. In the field of history, Kosambi's best known work was *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History* published in 1956. Kosambi's approach to history was realistic and scientific. He thought of history in terms of the dynamics of socio-economic formations rather than just a chronological narration of 'episodes' or the achievements of a few great men – kings, warriors or saints. His approach to history can be summed up in his own words. In *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History* Kosambi writes:

The light-hearted sneer 'India has had some episodes, but no history' is used to justify lack of study, grasp, intelligence on the part of foreign writers about India's past. The considerations that follow will prove that it is precisely the episodes — lists of dynasties and kings, tales of war and battle spiced with anecdote, which fill school texts — that are missing from Indian records. Here, for the first time, we have to reconstruct a history without episodes, which means that it cannot be the same type of history as in the European tradition.

While staying within the framework of Marxian analysis, Kosambi developed a new method and introduced new perspectives to the comprehension of Indian history – a complete change both in content and methodology. Kosambi rejected the mechanical application of the concept of historical materialism and suggested through his study that Indian society had a series of parallel forms qualitatively different from their western counterparts and thus did not need to be categorised necessarily into the classical modes of production.

Kosambi's analysis of Indian history helped established that Indian society also had its own history and its own stages of development and made social change the basis of periodisation of Indian history. During his life time, Kosambi was critical of the policies of Nehru, which, according to him, promoted capitalism in the guise of democratic socialism. Kosambi was an enthusiast of the Chinese revolution and its ideals, and, in addition, a leading activist in the World Peace Movement. According to the historian Irfan Habib, 'D. D. Kosambi and R.S. Sharma, together with Daniel Thorner, brought peasants into the study of Indian history for the first time.'

Transition from feudalism to capitalism

The Marxist analysis of the transition from feudalism to capitalism generated substantial interest in Indian academia, particularly among Marxist scholars. Thus we see a volume of literature in India mostly concerned with the origin of the feudal system, the comparison of the Indian feudal system with the European system, and a complete denial of the existence of feudalism in India. D.D. Kosambi, one of the earliest scholars in India concerned with the theme, analysed the existence of feudalism in Indian history. In his *Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Kosambi propounded the concept of feudalism from above and feudalism from below and also compared the Indian and European system. Another Indian historian, R.S. Sharma made a full scale study of the subject in his *Indian Feudalism*. On the other hand, scholars such as Harbans Mukhia questioned the existence of feudalism in India.

D.D. Kosambi analysed the existence of feudalism in Indian history through his 'concept of feudalism from above and feudalism from below'. According to Kosambi, feudalism from above meant a state where an emperor or a powerful king levied tributes on his subordinates, who did what they liked within their own territories as long as they paid the paramount ruler. These subordinate rulers might even have been tribal chiefs who once ruled the land by direct administration without the intermediary of a class which was in effect a part of the land owning strata. According to Kosambi, this category of 'feudalism from above' was found in the formation of most of the Indian states and kingdoms. For Kosambi, 'feudalism from below' meant the next stage where a class of land owners developed within the village between the state and peasantry. This class was subject to military service and hence claimed a direct relationship with state power. Taxes were collected by small intermediaries who passed on a fraction to the feudal lords or the monarch.

Kosambi found some similar characteristics between both European and Indian feudalism. Both feudal systems had low levels of technology in which the instruments of production were simple and generally inexpensive. In both feudal systems, the act of production was largely individual in character and the division of labour was at a very primitive level of development. In both systems, the production of immediate need of a household or a village community and not for a wider market existed. Moreover, political decentralization was common to both India and Europe.

2.5 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The noted sociologist and philosopher, Karl Marx gave the most important theory to show how the economy was a major factor in social change.
- Marx explained that economy constitutes the basic structure of society. This basic structure consists of the means of production (raw material, labour, machines and so on.) and the relationship of production.
- Change in the means and relationship of production, consequently, leads to the change in various institutions, i.e., in the superstructure of society. This change in the relationship of production occurs as a result of a conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed class, the haves and the have-nots, the ruling and the ruled class.
- Many Marxists considered dialectical materialism as the theoretical source of several strands of Marxism. Marx never used the term dialectical materialism which refers to the societal and economic transformation born of the material forces.
- Marxism is a fundamentally materialist philosophy because the foundation of it is the belief that the overall account of everything is matter which is characteristic of reality. If empirical study is able to identify the whole aspects of matter, therefore, matter is accepted as the beginning and ending of all reality.
- Marxism believes that everything 'contains two mutually incompatible and exclusive but nevertheless equally essential and indispensable parts or aspects'. The essential idea is that this union of opposites in natural world is the feature which makes every unit auto-dynamic in nature along with ensuring a continuous drive for movement and transformation.

NOTES

Check Your Progress

11. In Marxian analysis, what does the mode of production comprise of?
12. What does Kosambi mean by feudalism from above?

NOTES

- The law of negation was formed to explain this predisposition of natural world. Accordingly, Marx and Engels state that to organize to move forward or replicate a superior number, creatures are inclined in the direction of negating themselves.
- The law of transformation states that constant quantitative growth leads to changes in quality by 'leaps' in the environment, resulting in production of a totally new variety or creature. This is the way in which 'quantitative development becomes qualitative change'.
- D.P. Mukherjee, a professed Marxist or 'Marxologist' as he preferred to call himself, analysed Indian social history from a dialectical frame of reference.
- According to Mukherjee, the encouragement of the capitalist mode of production on the indigenous Indian mode of production created mass poverty and deprivation in India.
- Mukerji's dialectical approach suggested that tradition and modernity, colonialism and nationalism, individualism and collectivism could be understood as dialectically opposed to each other.
- D. P. Mukherjee preferred the historical-dialectical mode of sociological analysis rather than empirical-positivistic one.
- R.K. Mukherjee considered the question of value as an important aspect of sociology. He also argued that social science gives us knowledge and if we employ this knowledge for the betterment of man, then definitely one must create a value. His basic sociological ambition was to work for a better social order.
- R.K. Mukherjee promotes studying the development of human civilization through the study of biological evolution, spiritual and universal dimensions.
- R.K. Mukherjee maintained that society is 'the sum of structures and functions through which man orients himself to the three dimensions or levels of his environment'. These three levels are moral, psycho-social and ecological. Thus, society 'fulfils the basic requirements of sustenance, status and value fulfilment.'
- One of the most prominent Marxist sociologists of India, Akshay Ramanlal Desai was born in Nadiad, Gujarat in 1915.
- Desai's analysis of Indian society was radically different from other Indian sociologists. Desai rejected any interpretations of tradition with reference to religion, rituals and festivities.
- As a doctrinaire Marxist, for Desai, tradition was basically a secular phenomenon that originates and develops in social institutions like the family and the village.
- The mode of production is a core element of the Marxist account of history. In his historical materialism, Karl Marx saw the history of development in five distinct phases that are characterized by dominant mode of production.
- For Marx, the mode of production is comprised of the productive forces and the relations of production. These two interact and influence each other, and both develop in the course of the historical development of society.
- The Marxist analysis of the transition from feudalism to capitalism generated substantial interest in Indian academia, particularly among Marxist scholars.
- Damodar Dharmananda Kosambi was born in Portuguese held Goa in 1907.

NOTES

- Kosambi is known for being a Marxist historian who specialised in ancient India. Kosambi utilized the historical materialist approach in his work. In fact, he is considered to be the 'patriarch of the Marxist school of Indian historiography'.
- Kosambi's analysis of Indian history helped established that Indian society also had its own history and its own stages of development and made social change the basis of periodisation of Indian history.
- In his *Introduction to the study of Indian History*, Kosambi propounded the concept of feudalism from above and feudalism from below and also compared the Indian and European system.

2.6 KEY TERMS

Bourgeoisie: In Marxist contexts, it refers to the capitalist class who own most of society's wealth and means of production.

- **Historical materialism:** Historical materialism is a methodological approach to the study of human societies and their development over time first articulated by Karl Marx as the materialist conception of history
- **Dialectical materialism:** It is a Marxist that suggests that political and historical events result from the conflict of social forces and are interpretable as a series of contradictions and their solutions. The conflict is seen as caused by material needs
- **Diamat:** Diamat was a social theory coined by the 19th century philosopher Joseph Dietzgen. It emphasized commodities and the effects of their exchange over time. 'Diamat' is based upon three dialectical laws: 1. the identity of opposites; 2. the transition from quantity to quality; 3. the negation of negation. Joseph Stalin formulated the 'Soviet Philosophy of Diamat' and called it a 'proletarian conception of the world'. The basic idea of diamat is that every economic order grows to a state of maximum efficiency, while at the same time developing internal contradictions or weaknesses that contribute to its decay.
- **Proletariat:** It refers to working-class people regarded collectively; it is often used with reference to Marxism.

2.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

According to Marx, a change in the relationship of production occurs as a result of a conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed class, the haves and the have-nots, the ruling and the ruled class.

1. Institutions like the family, education, religion, polity, and so on, constitute the superstructure.
2. The concept of dialectical materialism suggests that all historical growth and change results from the struggle of opposites. To put it another way, history is the creation of class struggle, i.e., the class struggle between the capitalist and landowning classes, on the one hand, and the proletariat and peasantry, on the other.

NOTES

4. Dialectical approach suggested that tradition and modernity, colonialism and nationalism, individualism and collectivism could be understood as dialectically opposed to each other.
5. According to Mukherjee, the primary task of sociology is to understand the specific nature of the forces that sustain a particular society over the time.
6. Evolution has helped man form better and complex societies, in which they decide and control the environment. Animals, on the other hand, have limitations in their ability to affect and change the environment.
7. In R.K. Mukherjee work *Community and Society in India*, published in 1979, he argued that the true place of values in human life and progress can be understood only when we consider the natural history of value.
8. Ethics for man should be naturalistic, or based on scientific grounding itself and not on blind and rigid conformity to institutional values, but value-preferences, based on different social consequences of human behaviour, stemming from different alternative and complementary sets of institutional values regarded as social facts.
9. The chief reasons why the institutional fallacy persists in all societies are the institutional determination of his attitudes and social actions and relations and his rationalization in respect to his own behaviour and institutional standards that saves him from psychic conflicts.
10. According to Desai, the polarization of class interests, especially of the bourgeoisie in India, is the foundation of modern society in India.
11. In Marxian analysis, the mode of production is comprised of the productive forces and the relations of production. These two interact and influence each other, and both develop in the course of the historical development of society.
12. According to Kosambi, feudalism from above meant a state where an emperor or a powerful king levied tributes on his subordinates, who did what they liked within their own territories as long as they paid the paramount ruler. These subordinate rulers might even have been tribal chiefs who once ruled the land by direct administration without the intermediary of a class which was in effect a part of the land owning strata.

2.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the three laws of dialectics?
2. Write a short note on the Marxist critique of the concept of dialectical materialism.
3. What are the three levels of man's environment according to R.K. Mukherjee?
4. Discuss A.R. Desai's interpretation of tradition.
5. What do you think of Radha Kamal Mukerjee's opinion about values?
6. How does D.D. Kosambi analyse feudalism in India?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the Marxist theory of social change.
2. Examine the Marxist concept of dialectical materialism.
3. D.P. Mukherjee emphasized that sociologists of India must know the nature of tradition. Discuss.
4. What is the basic approach viewed by Radha Kamal Mukherjee to explain Indian society?
5. R.K Mukherjee promotes studying the development of human civilization through the study of biological evolution, spiritual and universal dimensions. Discuss.
6. Describe how Marx describes the origin of capitalism.

2.9 FURTHER READING

- Mukherjee, D.P. 1958. *Diversities: Essays in Economics, Sociology and Other Social Problems*. Delhi: Popular Publishing House.
- Mukherjee, R.K. 1965. *The Sociologist and Social Change in India Today*. Delhi: Prentice Hall of India.
- Calhoun, Craig J. 2002. *Classical Sociological Theory*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Abraham, Francis M. and John Henry Morgan. 1985. *Sociological Thought*. Chennai: Macmillan India.
- Aron, Raymond. 1965. *Main Currents in Sociological Thought, Vol. I and II*. Middlesex: Penguin Books.

NOTES

UNIT 3 SUBALTERN PERSPECTIVES

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Unit Objectives
- 3.2 Contribution of Ambedkar to Indian Society
 - 3.2.1 Influences on the Life and Thoughts of Ambedkar
- 3.3 Socio-Political Thoughts of Ambedkar
 - 3.3.1 Ambedkar's Idea of Democratic Socialism
 - 3.3.2 Ambedkar and Indian Democracy
 - 3.3.3 Ambedkar's Views on Economic Development and Planning
- 3.4 Role of Reason in the Philosophy of Ambedkar
 - 3.4.1 Ambedkar's Views on Religion
 - 3.4.2 Ambedkar and Buddhism
- 3.5 Ambedkar and Marxism
- 3.6 Ambedkar's Views on Caste and Untouchability
- 3.7 Ambedkar as the Chief Architect of the Indian Constitution
- 3.8 Disparity in the Socio-political Views of Gandhi and Ambedkar
- 3.9 Ranajit Guha
- 3.10 Summary
- 3.11 Key Terms
- 3.12 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 3.13 Questions and Exercises
- 3.14 Further Reading

NOTES

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learned about Marxist perspectives on Indian society. The final unit of the book will turn to subaltern perspectives of Indian society, especially the thoughts of Dr. Bhimrao Ramjee Ambedkar and Ranajit Guha.

B. R. Ambedkar undoubtedly ranks with the greatest leaders of modern India. He was well-known not only as the chief architect of the Constitution, but also as a great activist and reformist, a disciplined radical and revolutionary. He was a social revolutionary, a profound scholar, a charismatic leader of the downtrodden masses. Being a friend, philosopher and guide of the downtrodden in India, he continuously fought against evil and dreaded customs, blind beliefs and superstition of the Hindu society. This was made clear by Sri Prakash Chandra when he wrote, 'At a time when Indians were awakening from their plight and struggle for freedom, the ripples of renaissance spirit touched the depressed classes too. The stir found the instrument of reformation in Bhimrao. Responding to the call, he strode forward definitely fighting for a better deal for the depressed classes, displaying rare crusading spirit, achieving in the process the right to be given a place among the builders of India'. He was to concentrate the force of his protestant and reformist spirit on the age-old abuses and disabilities of the untouchable sections of Indian society. He denounced the caste system and fought relentlessly to establish a society based on the democratic ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. He firmly believed that the democratic society in India would only be responsible when the hierarchical structure of *varna* system is dismantled and the downtrodden untouchables are given equal status with other members of the society.

NOTES

The concluding sections of the unit will provide a brief synopsis of the thoughts of Ranajit Guha and David Hardiman.

3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Evaluate the contribution of Ambedkar to the reformation of Indian society
- Explain the concept of democratic socialism of Ambedkar
- Discuss the influence of Buddhism and Marxism on Ambedkar
- Explain Ambedkar's views on caste and untouchability
- Distinguish between the socio-political thoughts of Gandhi and Ambedkar
- Discuss Guha's analysis of tribal insurgencies in colonial India

3.2 CONTRIBUTION OF AMBEDKAR TO INDIAN SOCIETY

B.R. Ambedkar was certainly not the first to have started the work of social emancipation and political mobilization of the millions of people of the depressed classes, but he was the most effective in highlighting the inhuman treatment to which they were subjected to in Hindu society. His work was qualitatively different from that of his predecessors. He stood for the social liberation, economic emancipation and political advancement of the downtrodden millions. He, however, counselled the oppressed people not to be compliant and obedient either to inequality or justice. He wanted them to fight against the forces of oppression and exploitation and remodel society in accordance with the norms and provisions as enshrined in the Constitution of India.

Ambedkar was the symbol of the non-Brahmin social reform movement in modern India. As part of the general national awakening and democratic consciousness, Ambedkar's message succeeded in carrying the message of reform to classes which had so far been untouched by it. He combined in himself the role of a social reformer, a political leader and a spiritual guide of the untouchables. He played a unique role in shaping the mind and the political outlook of his community. His socio-political philosophy is India's most enlightened and modern gift to the weaker and backward section of our society. It has the potential to benefit and serve the larger interests of mankind.

Ambedkar's mission throughout life had been an uncanny desire to secure justice – social, economic and political for the disadvantaged sections of the Indian society. In his writings, an alternative socio-economic and political framework emerges, wherein the pragmatic and visionary aspects of his thinking meet on even ground. His social philosophy emanates in liberty, equality and fraternity. According to him, these three ideals were inherent in the teachings of Buddha. This trinity of ideals had a bearing in the Constituent Assembly where he delineated and emphasized the need for social democracy. While defining the basis of the Indian Constitution, he was conscious that the contents must be related to the interests of the weaker sections of society. In his scholarly pursuits as well as in his political activities, Ambedkar was driven by a desire to comprehend the vital issues of his time and to find solutions for the problems of Indian society. He raised certain pressing issues that no one was willing to take up or deal with and made sure that

they were not ignored and trampled over by the so called 'upper classes'. Ambedkar planned his programmes to bring the downtrodden millions of India from a state of dehumanization and slavery into one of equality through the use of modern methods based on education and the exercise of legal and political rights.

Ambedkar organized and inaugurated a number of conferences, attended a large number of meetings, started newspapers and wrote articles, editorials and books. The main theme in all these activities was the emancipation of the lowly, the poor and the untouchables. He repeatedly asked the Hindus to change their ways. Yet, despite his repeated requests, atrocities imposed on the untouchables continued and they were treated as less than human beings.

Ambedkar relentlessly fought for the cause of the depressed and the deprived of the Indian society and this brought him to develop his philosophy of humanism which centres around the problems of man. As stated by Dr. Jatava, 'Ambedkar's social humanism is a philosophical thought in which man's social situation and the analysis of its problems have been given utmost importance.... Man's dignity, protection of equal rights, values of individuality, welfare of common people, freedom of expression, just social order, right relations based on fraternity, man's all round development, man's liberty to express himself in the interest of new construction and perennial movement based activeness of the exploited people are some of the main features of Ambedkar's social humanism..... Ambedkar's humanism has been a movement for social freedom of the oppressed and expressed and exploited, and it has advocated that people must remain conscious and awake for each other's just interests, respect and rights'. Thus, we see how his dynamic and democratic humanism aims at liberating man from the bonds of social malaise.

3.2 Influences on the Life and Thoughts of Ambedkar

Ambedkar was a social revolutionary and the most renowned militant champion of the untouchables. He vehemently denounced the inequalities which Brahmanical Hinduism heaped upon the untouchables and fought for the cause of social equality. He experienced the injustices of being a member of a disadvantaged group of society. His aim was to establish an equitable social order in a pluralistic multi-religious and class-caste ridden Indian society. He was closely acquainted with western political tradition, especially with liberation and at the same time quite well versed in ancient Hindu and Buddhist literature. He was influenced by Indian as well as western intellectual and the moral ideas of many great thinkers like Gautam Buddha, Jyotiba Phule, John Dewey (his mentor at Columbia University), Karl Marx, Justice M.G. Ranade, and so on.

The ideas of John Dewey, Edwin R.A Seligman, the Fabians and British idealists had a deep impact on Ambedkar. He borrowed his notion of religion from Edmund Burke, the theory of government from J.S. Mill and Jefferson and the notion of social liberty from Booker T. Washington. Ambedkar was affected by the Indian social system and ideologies and was influenced by the Western modernism. He used the methodology and strategy derived from the West to analyze Indian society. Though he admired the ideals of western liberalism and Marxism, he perceived their perfection in Buddhism. All the above said thinkers influenced Ambedkar in one way or another and shaped as well as reshaped his thinking process, convictions, and pragmatic approach to social justice. In order to understand the life and thoughts of Ambedkar one has to understand the influences of these personalities on Ambedkar.

NOTES

NOTES

Ambedkar had great reverence for the life and message of Buddha. He appreciated Lord Buddha's belief in man's capacity to achieve salvation without extraneous aid. He regarded Buddha as his master and his teachings as the complete antithesis of Hinduism. Lord Buddha revolted against traditional Hinduism. According to Ambedkar, it was a powerful revolt against Brahmanism leading to the rejection of liberty, equality and fraternity. Buddhism attempted to restore the law of reason and rationalism in the life of the Indian people by doing away with prayers, rituals and sacrifices. Buddha fervently followed the doctrine of egalitarianism and humanism and his message was for all. Ambedkar was greatly fascinated by the personality and philosophical profoundness of the founder of Buddhism. Buddha's indomitable faith in the capacity of man to shape his own destiny appears to have had a lasting influence on Ambedkar. Buddha's principles and philosophy had an immense impact on Ambedkar and this was proved by his conversion to Buddhism and his pragmatic attitude in his perception of social justice.

Mahatma Phule, the Martin Luther of Maharashtra, was considered by Ambedkar as one of the greatest of our social reformers. He described Phule as 'the greatest shudra of modern India'. Ambedkar remarked that Mahatma Phule made the lower classes of Hindus conscious of their plight and preached to India that social democracy was more vital than independence from foreign rule. Phule brought Ambedkar closer to the liberal and reformist traditions of Maharashtra. Under Phule's influence Ambedkar overcame the limitations of the liberal reformist movement by consciously becoming the man of the masses and forging a political organization to bring the masses together. Ambedkar not only believed in the driving force of principles and policies but gave equal importance to the work of implementing them. His main achievement was his positive contribution to the radical reformist theory and practice in Maharashtra. Here also we find Mahatma Phule's influence on Dr. Ambedkar. Ambedkar continued the revolutionary work started by Jyotibha Phule.

Both Gandhi and Ambedkar were heroic and the very embodiment of revolt against the unjust social order existing in India. Both were critical of the evils of the Hindu social system, especially untouchability, and were determined to uproot the evils while leaving the foundations of Indian culture undisturbed. As made clear by the historian Bipin Chandra, 'Both share in common a total opposition to caste oppression and caste discrimination and commitment to transform the social, economic and cultural conditions of Harijans'. Gandhi was against untouchability and wanted to abolish it with the help of adult franchise combined with a moral and social drive. In this context we see that Ambedkar's approach was not radically different from that of Gandhi. Ambedkar was an enemy of the caste system and he stood for its total liquidation like Gandhi. He believed that the caste system would have to go if untouchability was to be eradicated. Though Gandhi favoured *varna vyavastha* in his early days, by 1935, he declared that the caste system would have to go and admitted that the *varna vyavastha* that he favoured earlier was non-existent in practice. Like Ambedkar, he asserted that Hinduism had to become casteless if it was to survive. Above all these similarities one must point out that although the goals pursued by Gandhi and Ambedkar were almost the same, their strategies were different and this we will study in detail in a later unit.

M.G. Ranade was another great person who influenced Ambedkar. Both of them strove for the removal of all the evils prevailing in Hindu society and its reorganization. Like Ranade, Ambedkar also regarded the advent of the British in India as providential and responsible for the intellectual awakening of India and the introduction of the concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity. The British made Indians feel ashamed of their social

customs and moral code and forced upon them the revaluation of social values besides giving a common system of law and government. According to Ambedkar, the age of Ranade was honest and more enlightened. Leaders like Ranade engaged themselves in studying and examining the facts of life and moulded their lives accordingly. Ambedkar held that Ranade was a great man not only by the standards of his time, but according to any standard. Ranade's life was nothing but a relentless struggle against social injustice, social evils and for social reforms. He struggled to create rights to vitalize the conscience of Hindu society which had become moribund and morbid. Ambedkar also followed his path and both of them wanted to create the ideal social democracy.

John Dewey was Ambedkar's mentor at Columbia University in USA and his *Philosophy of Instrumentalism* made Ambedkar pragmatic in his approach towards a critical analysis of the concrete problems facing humanity. John Dewey left an indelible mark on Ambedkar through his realistic, integrative and pragmatic approaches to systematically analyzing the problems concerning politics, economics, society, religion and history. Dewey perceived these problems piecemeal and through idealism.

Besides the above mentioned influences of great thinkers, Ambedkar's own bitter experiences went a long way in moulding his life, perception and ideas. Ambedkar bore the brunt of caste discrimination and often faced humiliation for belonging to a lower caste. It may be concluded that it was his own bitter experiences and the influence of the above great thinkers that made him take a stand against Hinduism and the Hindu social order as he believed that it stood in the way of establishment of an egalitarian society.

3.3 SOCIO-POLITICAL THOUGHTS OF AMBEDKAR

The eradication of untouchability and the caste system was the mission of Ambedkar's life. He analyzed every problem of Indian society – economic, social, political, cultural and educational, keeping this mission in mind. He held that each of these problems had a caste dimension and the caste system made the depressed classes, mainly the untouchables, social outcasts, economically slaves and politically handicapped. They were oppressed, exploited and marginalized in every walk of life. For Ambedkar, safeguarding the interest of the depressed classes was of paramount importance because nobody had championed the cause of this deprived lot before. Keeping this in mind, let us now try to analyze the important tenets of his socio-political thought.

3.2. Ambedkar's Idea of Democratic Socialism

Democracy occupied a central place in Ambedkar's ideological map. He was a true and sincere democrat and his major contribution to political thinking was to focus on the reliance of social democracy to political democracy. He believed that without social reforms, political reforms are meaningless since the state is ultimately a social institution. He warned that as long as there was inequality on the social and economic plane, there could be no political democracy. He firmly believed that political progress would be impossible without a reformed and enlightened society. This is why he believed that social reforms should precede political reforms.

Ambedkar refers to democracy as a system which brings about fundamental changes in the social and economic life of the people without resorting to disputes and bloodshed. He desired to remove contradictions created by economic and social inequalities. He viewed democracy as a mode of associated living in which there would

NOTES

Check Your Progress

1. Name three people who influenced Ambedkar.
2. Who did Ambedkar borrow his notion of social liberty from?
3. Who was considered to be the Martin Luther of Maharashtra?
4. What was the main goal that Ambedkar and Gandhi had in common?

be no discrimination on social and economic grounds. He sounded a note of warning that democracy should not become a slogan or a mere form of government. He considered it to be a way of life through which social justice can be established.

According to Ambedkar, the essential requirements for the successful working of a democracy are:

- There must be no glaring inequality in society.
- There must be statutory provisions to protect the interests of the oppressed classes.
- There must be equality in law and administration and there should not be tyranny of the majority over the minority.
- An effective opposition which is an important factor in the working of a successful democracy.
- A moral order, without which democracy cannot sustain.

Ambedkar visualized the economic welfare of the people through the combination of state socialism with parliamentary democracy. Though he was a great admirer of the parliamentary system of government till 1947, he later thought that a non-parliamentary executive would suit India better. He pointed out that the representative nature of the executive does not necessarily ensure the rights for the minorities. In a parliamentary democracy, the elected majority works according to its own manifesto. Parliamentary democracy seemed a must to him in order to protect individual freedom, as otherwise there were chances of it turning into a dictatorship. Ambedkar's solution for this was to retain parliamentary democracy and prescriptive state socialism according to the law of the Constitution so that it will be beyond the reach of a parliamentary majority to suspend, amend or abrogate it. In one of the speeches in the Constituent Assembly in 1949, Ambedkar pointed out that for the operation and survival of democracy, the people should hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving social and economic objectives.

3.2. Ambedkar and Indian Democracy

In the Indian situation where the society is caste-ridden and the loyalties and interests are caste bound, any democratic government is bound to degenerate into a communal majority rule. This majority would be incapable of articulating and representing the interests of every member of society. Ambedkar exhorted the people to give up hero-worship which was a strong feature of Indian politics. For him, it was a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship. Hence, he repeatedly insisted on the need to banish hero-worship from the Indian political scenario. Ambedkar wanted the people of India to develop a sense of national solidarity. He held that the operation of caste in politics would vitiate the whole political atmosphere and the democratic institutions and processes into one nation. Ambedkar viewed nationalism as an emotional feeling that has great strength. In a discriminating society, the spirit of oneness cannot come into existence. He believed not only in political integrity and independence but also in social integrity. His nationalism was not aggressive nationalism, for he knew it would become irrational and give birth to intolerance. He held that political parties are indispensable for democracy. There should be at least two parties to prevent a democratic government from becoming despotic. Under a one party government, the danger of tyranny and misdirection to public affairs cannot be ruled out.

Ambedkar wanted a change in the life pattern of the untouchables. His work in public life developed in three directions: first, awakening and organizing the untouchables,

second, securing political representations for the untouchables and third, encouraging the depressed classes to educate themselves. He knew that without political rights and political power, the elevation of the depressed classes would not be possible. For the achievement of political rights for them, Ambedkar submitted many petitions and memoranda for representation in the legislature and sought reservations in various fields of employment. He organized the Independent Labour Party for the landless peasants, agriculturists and the workers. In 1942, he formed another political party - All India Scheduled Caste Federation (AISCF) which stressed that since the Scheduled Castes did not possess social and economic power, political power should be seized by them. In 1956, Ambedkar visualized the establishment of the Republican Party of India, as an opposition party which would join hands with other political groups in order to solve the problems of the untouchables. He also fought for the rights of women and this is a significant aspect of his social reform activity.

Ambedkar repeatedly stated that power was necessary to protect the rights of the people. He held that right must exist before the power is set up and it would be a serious error to reverse the order of precedence. He was of the opinion that rights are protected not only by law but also by the 'social and moral conscience of society'. If rights are opposed by the community, no one can guarantee them in the real sense of the term. On the other hand, if social conscience recognizes the rights enacted by the law, it will be safer and more secure. Hence it was absolutely necessary that a social organization is free from rigid social barriers.

3.2. Ambedkar's Views on Economic Development and Planning

As an academic economist, Ambedkar has made significant contributions to the various fields of economics. In the early period (1915-25) his focus was mainly centred on themes like public finance, monetary and international economics. But his economic writings in the later period dealt with a wide range of interrelated issues including perspectives on economic development and planning, the economic system, political economy of the caste system, etc. Ambedkar's concept of democracy was reconciled with his concept of socialism. In a democracy, individual rights are indispensable and they can be protected by socialism. Individual rights are, to a certain extent, dependent upon the economic structure of society. He emphasized the need to strengthen the social and economic foundation for a smooth functioning of democracy. He advocated State Socialism in which the State would control the basic industries and economic exploitation could be avoided to a great extent. He recommended economic planning. As stated earlier, his concept of state socialism is constitutional state socialism along with parliamentary democracy. This combination was necessary to ensure that social and economic organizations would be more egalitarian and political means would thus become more meaningful for the poor and underprivileged.

Ambedkar argued for an important place to be given to the labour and depressed classes in the planned economic development of the country. He wanted to develop programmes through planned economic development and translate them into simpler terms so that the common man could understand peace, housing, clothing, education, good health, and so on. He laid great responsibility on the State to provide the poor with facilities for their growth according to their needs. Though he wanted agriculture to be the primary industry in our country, he also wanted industries to be developed so as to rectify the imbalanced economy of India. Ambedkar emphasized industrial development as a solution to the problem of agricultural development. He believed that development

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES

Check Your Progress

5. What are the two salient points required for the successful working of a democracy?
6. Up until what point was Ambedkar an admirer of the Parliamentary system of Government?
7. What did Ambedkar consider a better alternative to the Parliamentary system for India?
8. What two demands did Ambedkar want fulfilled for the untouchables?
9. Why did Ambedkar consider industrial development as a solution to the problem of agricultural development?
10. What was the main feature of Ambedkar's model of democratic socialism?

of the industrial sector was necessary to reduce the surplus labour in agriculture and to create favourable conditions for production. Ambedkar attributed industrialization with a key role to play, favoured economic planning, particularly in infrastructure and the social service sector, set up progressive labour laws and planning with focus on labourers and the down-trodden masses of India. He made a call for 'State Socialism' involving nationalization of basic and key industries such as insurance and agricultural land. He favoured a switch over to socialism through democratic means. He, in his economic vision, supported modern civilization and scientific development. He emphasized on the active role and participation of the State in economic and social development through the instrument of planning. He favoured special planning for the depressed classes and policy of reservation for protecting against discrimination and promoting their effective participation in the economic and social sphere. As suggested by Bhalachandra Mungekar, the main features of Ambedkar's model of democratic socialism may be summed up as:

- Basic freedom to the individual vis-à-vis the State to be guaranteed by the Constitution.
- Nationalization of the means of production such as land and key enterprises.
- Recognition of the role of private industries.
- Economic planning.
- No discrimination among citizens on the basis of caste, gender or religion.
- Democratic/Constitutional means for social change/transformation'.

Ambedkar always wanted democracy to work towards socialism. He felt that to strengthen the foundations of democracy in India a new cultural basis was required and that Buddhism met such a need. The above analysis clearly indicates that the economic philosophy of Ambedkar is value-oriented, and his economic ideas, may well be applied in Indian society with special reference to the pitiable conditions of the Scheduled Castes and the minorities and other backward classes. Ambedkar was personally acquainted with the suffering of these people, and therefore, he believed in a positive approach to mitigate their socio-economic miseries.

3.4 ROLE OF REASON IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF AMBEDKAR

Supremacy of reason was a cardinal principle in Ambedkar's philosophy. His own criticism of the sacred literature and the past was based on this principle. He believed that Hindus were not free to follow this reason. On the other hand, the behaviour of the Hindus must conform to the sanctions laid down by Manu, Veda, Smriti and Sadachar. He wrote, 'Rationalism as a canon of interpreting the Vedas and Smriti's is absolutely condemned by Manu'. It was considered to be as wicked as atheism and the punishment for it was excommunication. In case of any conflict between the Veda and Smriti or between the Smriti and Sruti, the solution was not based on reason. No attempt was made to find out which of them accorded with reason. In Ambedkar's opinion, there was hardly ever any reflective thought to be found in Hinduism.

Ambedkar's attack on the sacred literature and norms of the Hindus was in fact an attack on the graded inequality sanctioned by them. Though he accepted the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* in the early days of his life, in his later life, he criticized the *Gita* as a religious and political book which upheld the teachings of the Vedas and raised the

NOTES

Brahmins to a superior position. In another place, he described the *Gita* as 'an irresponsible book of ethics, a compromise of all errors'. He also found in it the social philosophy based on the *Triguna* of *Samkhya* system which was a cruel pervasion of the philosophy of Kapila and which created the caste system and graded inequality a part and parcel of Hindu social life. Through these criticisms he wanted to show the Hindus that it is the doctrines contained in their sacred books which are responsible for the decline and fall of their society. The question of the removal of the institution of untouchability inevitably led him to the criticism of the sacred books. Ambedkar, after a careful review of the sacred literature of the Hindus, felt convinced that no reverence was due to it. His predecessors were not so acutely conscious of this logical necessity. They never aimed at rejecting the sacred books as Ambedkar did. The difference between Ambedkar and the earlier social reformers was in the manner of their approach to the sacred books and in the purpose for which these books were used. The attitude of Ambedkar was radical and revolutionary and that of other social reforms was melioristic.

3.4. Ambedkar's Views on Religion

The concept of religion, for Ambedkar, is quite different from the traditional one. The traditional meaning of religion is some sort of belief in supernatural power. He did not consider the concept of God, soul and heaven as essential to religion. His view of religion is social and secular, and human morality is the key to this. For him, morality arises from the direct necessity for man to love man. It does not require the sanction of God. In his opinion, it is not to please God that man has to be moral, but it is for his own good. According to Dr. Jatava, 'Religion as morality, morality as love of man for man, and love of man as brotherhood is the essence of Ambedkar's humanism The fundamental purpose of Ambedkar's humanism is to reconstruct human society by establishing right relations between man and man as the basis of liberty, equality and fraternity'. Ambedkar acknowledged the power of religion and upheld its need, but there is no place in his religion for God and the transcendent. He subscribed to a secular religion, moving away from established religions and geared towards the sacred. He felt that since human beings are part of this world, the primary role of religion is to safeguard the moral domain.

Religion, according to Ambedkar, was essential for man as well as society. He considered it an instrument for the upliftment of the individual. He said, ' I agree with Burke when he says that true religion is the foundation of society, the basis on which all true civil government rests, and both their sanctions. Consequently when I urge that these ancient rules of life be annulled, I am anxious that its place shall be taken by a religion of principles which alone can lay claim to being a true religion'. He held that religion alone gave hope of a better life to the poor and so they cling to it and find solace in it.

Ambedkar exhorted his people to cultivate an enlightened view of religion and not to be lured by the traits of Hinduism like toleration and bhakti or to be attracted by the saints. He held that the saints were ineffective in the abolition of the caste system because they did not attack the caste system. In fact, many of them were staunch believers in this system. He asked the common man not to resign himself to his fate and accept his position as a divine dispensation. According to him, 'Bhakti made their nerves soft, delicate and yielding'. Ambedkar wanted to root out this disease from their minds.

Ambedkar was of the opinion that religion is an important element in education, in social organization and in the promotion of the spirit of devotion to the common good, but

NOTES

only when it shows utmost liberalism and acts upon the principle of secularism. He understood that it is not possible to annihilate religious systems from the Indian soil. So the only remedy for this, according to him, was that they should be more liberal and should improve social conditions of all without any sectarian feelings.

Ambedkar's view of religion was that it should be in accord with reason and morality and the fundamental tenets of liberty, equality and fraternity. It should not ennoble and sanctify poverty but offer its followers prosperity and salvation in this world instead of in the next. But Hinduism never adheres to the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity and practices partiality towards some of its followers. So Ambedkar through his social reform movements was consistently attacking the criminal indifference of the people towards the dangerous effects of the social institutions of Hinduism. The rigid orthodoxy of Hindus led him to give up any hope of reforming Hinduism and to advocate Buddhist *Dhamma* instead.

3.4. Ambedkar and Buddhism

In Ambedkar's view, the real remedy to untouchability is to replace the social relations governed by the caste system of Hinduism by the one based on equality, justice and fraternity. It is in this context, he favoured the social philosophy of Buddha, which he thought would help to restructure the social, cultural and political relations to promote the well-being of majority of people. He described Buddha as 'the greatest teacher of mankind who taught the noblest doctrine of love'. He considered Buddhism as the religion of modern era which would eventually be embraced by the whole world.

It was K.A. Keluskar, a well-known Marathi writer and social reformer, who presented Ambedkar a book called *Life of Gautama Buddha*. He read the book with great curiosity and learnt how Buddha had through selfless service improved the lot of the entire community. He was impressed by all that he had studied about the life of Gautam Buddha. Ambedkar studied Buddhism and did a lot of research on the subject. He analyzed the various aspects of Buddhism as a movement against dogmatism, conservatism and social inequality. Ambedkar's research work on the social history of Buddhism, *The Untouchables*, was published in 1948. According to him, the origin of untouchability was the result of a struggle between Brahmanism and Buddhism. In comparison to Hinduism, Ambedkar analyzed the merits of Buddhism which had widely influenced the people during ancient times.

It was natural for Ambedkar to seek refuge in Buddha, because, as he knew, the Buddha was the only philosopher, who brought about a social revolution and welcomed people from the shudra and untouchable communities into his fold. Ambedkar also accepted people from the lower castes in the same way as the Buddha had. Buddha's humanism was the main factor that attracted Ambedkar and made him a true disciple of the Master, the enlightened one. After a lot of research, he accepted the Buddhism and its trisaran—Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha on 14th October, 1956, in Naghaur along with more than two lakhs of men and women. According to Ambedkar, 'Buddhism is a part and parcel of Bharatiya culture. I have taken care that my conversion will not harm the tradition of culture and history of this land'. This act was the first of many mass conversions of low caste Hindus to Buddhism. The conversion of Ambedkar and his followers to Buddhism was an unprecedented historical event. Such a big conversion had not taken place since the time of Ashoka the Great. They took refuge in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, and then took vows for *Panchsheel* of not to kill, not to steal, not to tell lies, not to consume liquor and not to indulge in adultery.

Ambedkar explained that the purpose of Dhamma is not to delineate the origin of the world but to reconstruct the world. In Dhamma, there is no place for prayers, pilgrimages, rituals, ceremonies or sacrifices. Buddha also taught *prajna* (understanding as against superstition and supernaturalism), *karuna* (love), and *samata* (equality). Buddhism does not recognize caste and affords a full scope for progress. The Buddha never claimed his teachings to be infallible. He also did not claim divinity for himself or for his religion. The basis of Buddhism is reason and a rational way to eradicate suffering.

The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha are known as 'Tri Saran,' Triratna or the 'Triple Gems'. The trisaran is the underlying source of unity behind all the Buddhist sects the world over. It is an emotional source of bringing together the entire community of Buddhists. When pronounced by the Upasakas or Bhikkus, their sounds pacify our mind and elevate it. It creates a feeling of brotherhood, of mutual love and sympathy. In fact, the triple gems bring all the Buddhists together and bind them in sacred bond. A refugee of the triple gem is also duty bound to liberate the people living in the lower levels of existence from suffering. As a true refugee in the triple gem, Ambedkar not only challenged the *varna vyavastha* of Hindu society, but also the validity of the superiority of the Brahmins.

The Dhamma is known as the 'true refuge', for it is the wisdom by means of which we attain *Nirvana*. The meaning of the word 'Dhamma' is to hold one from falling into low states of existence. Taking refuge in the Dhamma means the taking refuge in the *Ten Parmitas* which are the forms of spiritual practices by which one learns true submission and they are also the basis for attaining the cessation of suffering. The word 'Sanga' means 'inseparable'. It also means 'those who have the wish for liberation or Nirvana'. Any individual can enter Sangha, if he has faith in both the Buddha and the Dhamma. It is a home, where one could learn the lessons of right knowledge and right conduct. The aim of Sangha is to achieve the ideals of the Dhamma into practice. The Sangha is open to all, and there is no barrier of caste and community, if anyone wishes to take refuge in the Dhamma. The discriminations based upon the being of man or woman, rich or poor, low or high, do not have any place in the Sangha. All members of the Sangha are equal and are bound by the feelings of fellowship.

Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha all generate a pervasive feeling of unity. According to Ambedkar, a sense of universality prevails in them because without social brotherhood or spiritual unity, there is little hope of creating peace and harmony in the world. The triple gems touch the hearts of all those who feel oneness among human beings irrespective of their creed and colour.

'The Buddha and His Dhamma' by Ambedkar

Ambedkar analyzed the basic tenets of Buddhism in his magnum opus, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, published posthumously in 1957. He wrote it with the intention of creating a single text for new Buddhists to read and follow. He wanted to simplify the teachings of the Buddha that they might be easily understood by oppressed communities, specifically dalits. He made the triple gem widely known and acceptable through his work. Ambedkar conceived it as the gospel of Buddhism as well as a defence against its critics. While embracing Buddhism, Ambedkar told the vast gathering that he was renouncing Hindu religion in his native land in order to continue his work for the revival of Buddhism and for the welfare of mankind. In theory, *The Buddha and His Dhamma* serves as the philosophical, ideological, and religious templates for Buddhists. It is a true guide for all the Buddhists. It is the best basis for propagating the Dhamma, at least in India.

NOTES

NOTES

In a short passage excerpted from *The Buddha and His Dhamma* Ambedkar asserted that the contemporary relevance of Buddha's message. He made it clear that for the present world Buddhism is the only religion which can save it from the dangers of the nuclear age. As stated by Valerian Rodrigues, '*The Buddha and His Dhamma* highlights the central issues that concerned him throughout his life and demarcate his view sharply from that of his adversaries. The work contains the central teachings of Buddha along with a commentary built into it. The commentary transposes the Buddha's teachings to the present and suggests its contemporary relevance with respect to the problems that confront humanity. He saw Buddhism as an ideology that engages with the world, privileging the poor and exploited. Ambedkar also upheld the superiority of Buddhism over other religions especially Islam and Christianity'. He thus established the hegemony of Buddhism with a new foundation.

The Maha Bodhi, a famous Buddhist journal in India, however, opined that *The Buddha and His Dhamma* was a dangerous book. Ambedkar's interpretation of Buddhism as merely a social system, was not a correct interpretation of Buddhism but a new orientation. The title, pleaded this reviewer, should be changed from the 'Buddha And His Dhamma' to that of 'Ambedkar And His Dhamma'; for Ambedkar preached non-Dhamma as Dhamma for motives of political and social reform.

3.5 AMBEDKAR AND MARXISM

Along with Buddhism, the other ideology that deeply attracted Ambedkar in the 1950s was Marxism. In November 1956, he made a trip to Nepal to attend the World Buddhist Conference and there he spoke on Karl Marx and Buddha. He showed extraordinary interest in Marxism during the 1950s and he started working on a book titled *India and Communism*, which however, did not make much progress. Ambedkar held that he had come to a conclusion that the present or future generation would have ultimately to choose between the gospel of Buddha and the gospel of Karl Marx. On another occasion, while he was talking to Mr. Crowley, a leader of the scheduled castes, he opined that, 'if the social structure was not altered, the present system was likely to collapse pretty soon, and added that the alternative, if democracy did not work in India, was something of communism'. According to him, Marx's philosophy was the satisfying philosophy for the lower orders.

Speaking on the topic *Buddha and Karl Marx*, Ambedkar stated that the goal of Buddha and Marx was the same. According to Valerian Rodrigues, 'He (Ambedkar) identified certain crucial areas on which he agreed with Karl Marx: the task of philosophy is to transform the world; there is a conflict between class and class; private ownership of property begets sorrow and exploitation, and good society requires that private property be collectivized. He found that on all these four issues Buddha is in agreement with Marx. He, however, rejected the inevitability of socialism, the economic interpretation of history; the thesis on pauperization of the proletariat: dictatorship of the proletariat, withering away of the state, and the strategy of violence as a means to seize power'. Marx said that private property was the root cause of sorrow. It resulted in exploitation, suffering and enslavement. Buddha also wanted to abolish *Dukkha* (sorrow) and the expression of sorrow was used in Buddhist literature in the sense of property.

Ambedkar's basic religious outlook came in the way of a proper assessment of Marxism. According to him, Buddhism and communism differed from each other in their means to achieve the same goal. Communism adopted violent methods to abolish private

property. But Buddhism stressed on non-violent means to achieve the goal. Buddha's method was different and it wanted to change the mind of man. His way was not to force people to do what they did not like to do even though it was good for them. His way was to alter the disposition of men so that they would voluntarily do what they would not otherwise do. The Marxist way was based on force. Moreover, the Buddhist system was a democratic system, whereas the communist system was based on dictatorship. Therefore, Ambedkar considered the Buddhist method as the safest and the soundest. The Buddhist method of bringing about a change was superior to the Marxist method because Buddha believed in persuasion, moral teaching and love. Ambedkar regarded Buddhism as a moral and tolerant alternative to Marxism. To sum up, we can say that Ambedkar asserted that Buddhism could provide the missing dimensions for socialism and for this there was an urgent need for discussion between Marxism and Buddhism.

3.6 AMBEDKAR'S VIEWS ON CASTE AND UNTOUCHABILITY

Untouchability, which is a unique social institution was a great barrier, according to Ambedkar, in the formation of an equitable order of society and hence his major writings were concerned with untouchability and the caste system. According to him, one of the major weaknesses of Hinduism was the caste system and its segregation of untouchability. Caste is not a physical thing, but a state of mind. Ambedkar held that religion which has inculcated the notion of caste is to be blamed for this belief. He believed that the caste system is not merely division of labour and it has disorganized and demoralized the Hindus. The caste and caste consciousness has served to keep alive the memory of past feuds between castes and has prevented solidarity. Virtue and morality become caste ridden and caste bound. So Ambedkar opposed untouchability and stood for a radical change in the socio-political system to bring about an equitable society. He denounced the caste system and fought relentlessly to establish a society based on the democratic ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. For this he wanted the varna system to be dismantled. Ambedkar believed that eradication of caste system should be centred in the social reforms.

Ambedkar's life was shaped and influenced by bitter and discriminatory personal experiences of being a dalit. He, therefore, wanted to enquire into the origin and development of the caste system and the practice of untouchability. His rational enquiry of the Hindu religion led him to the conclusion that varna and caste system originated in the Vedic culture. Ambedkar argued that graded inequality is the normative anchor of the caste system. Graded inequality restricts the reach of equality to the members of the caste. According to Ambedkar, *Chaturvarna* presupposes the classification of the people into four definite categories, the Shudras being the lowest category. They were denied all rights and privileges including that of securing education. Ambedkar found caste to be a fixture of the Hindu religion.

Ambedkar had serious disagreements with Gandhi on the notion of caste. Gandhi upheld varna system as the basis of social organization based on a division of labour. Ambedkar however felt that the principle underlying Gandhi's conception of varna is the same as that of caste, i.e., assigning social agents on the basis of birth rather than worth. It led to upholding graded inequality and denial of freedom and equality.

NOTES

Check Your Progress

11. What was Ambedkar's main criticism of Hindu literature?
12. What was the main concept of religion for Ambedkar?
13. What was Ambedkar's main criticism of Hinduism?
14. Who introduced Ambedkar to Buddha and his teachings?
15. When did Ambedkar convert to Buddhism?
16. What are the Triple Gems of Buddhism?
17. When was *The Buddha and His Dhamma* published?

NOTES

It is said that the institution of untouchability is a corollary institution of the caste system of Hindu society. V.S. Nargolkar states, 'Untouchability is largely an out-growth of the system of caste and caste in its turn is the illegitimate child of the concept of varna'. Justice Nasrullah Beg is also of the opinion that, 'the evil of untouchability is not a separate institution by itself. It is a corollary of the institution of caste system warp and weft of the Hindu society'. As stated above, many scholars and writers are of the opinion that untouchability is a corollary of the caste system. But when we go into the details of caste system we find that the above observations are not very relevant.

On the basis of the different definitions of caste, the main features seem to be:

- Segmented division of society based on hierarchy
- Restriction on feeding and social interest
- Civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections
- Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation
- Restriction on marriage

Here we find that there is no mention of untouchability. Though the caste system generates a feeling of superiority among the higher class and a feeling of inferiority among the lower class, it has nothing to do with 'untouchability'. Ambedkar rightly observed this in his work, *Caste in India, their Mechanism, Genesis and Development*, 'the idea of pollution has been attached to the institution of caste only because the caste that enjoys the highest rank is the priestly class, while we know that priest and purity are old associates. We may therefore conclude that the idea of pollution is a characteristic of caste only in so far as caste has a religious flavour'. Hence, we can say that untouchability is not a corollary of the caste system.

The caste system divides the Hindu society into four varnas whereas untouchability divides the Hindu society into 'touchable' and 'untouchable'. The high class Brahmins and observe 'untouchability'. This led Dr. R.K. Kshirsagar to write, 'undoubtedly, caste system has consolidated the institution of untouchability by enforcement of several disabilities and restrictions under the fictitious belief of 'purity'. As such caste and untouchability are so intertwined with each other that one cannot safely bifurcate them. However, the minutest observation reveals that the reality is different, both are separate institutions, at least at their inception'. Hence, we can say that untouchability and caste been mainly a creation of the people than any scripture or divine being.

According to Ambedkar, the caste system has been a blot on Hinduism and it has robbed the Hindu religion of its vitality and brilliance. Untouchability is the worst feature of the caste system and it is deeply embedded in the minds of Hindu society. Ambedkar held that it acted as a powerful barrier against the emotional integration of the people of India as their entire outlook was coloured by it. It had divided the Indian society into high born and low born castes and untouchability continued to exercise a predominant hold on the social life of Indian society, especially the Hindus. According to Mahatma Gandhi, 'untouchability is phenomenon which is peculiar to Hinduism only and it has got no warrant either in reason or in shastras'. When we look into details, we see that untouchability had initially originated in the contempt and hatred of Buddhism by the Brahmanic forces which became a part of Hindu social habit and later a part of Hindu religion. Here we should not forget the fact that untouchability during the earlier days

was not so rigorous. But as time went by it became more injurious, humiliating and inhuman in nature.

Ambedkar had fully realized the meaning of caste and untouchability in his childhood and adolescent life. He experienced the anguish resulting from the discrimination based on the low and high of the Hindu social system. Social criticism is the foundation of Ambedkar's philosophy and action. It revolves around the humiliation he and other members of the repressed class underwent in India as untouchables. He fought for the liberation of all people who were systematically separated and segregated from the mainstream. He found the caste system to be an outdated, impracticable, irrational and superstitious social practice. He narrated the damages done by the caste system on society and set out to make with the annihilation of caste as his goal. His prime concern was the establishment of an egalitarian society and he fought consistently for human dignity and social equality.

The most important part of Ambedkar's career was, in a nutshell, to secure social and political equality. He, therefore, pleaded the realization of economic and social democracy in India, for political democracy was unreal unless preceded by economic and social democracy. According to K.L. Bhatia, '.....to Ambedkar social democracy means to enable every person to lead an all-round life involving as much the cultivation of the mind as also the satisfaction of basic physical wants. This has been the aim of human society. The cultivation of the mind depends on *Saddhamma* – the combination of *Pradhva, Sila, Karuna* and *Maitri*. *Saddhamma* means the eradication and amelioration of all social barriers between man and man, the worth and not the birth is the measure of man, it promotes equality; it kindles in man the spirit of fraternity. This is, on the one hand, the way of life based on liberty, equality and fraternity; this is, on the other hand, the way of attaining a government based on social democracy which is the cornerstone as well as a milestone of social justice'. Social justice therefore, means justice which is not confined to a fortunate few, but takes within its sweep large masses of disadvantaged and underprivileged segments of the society.

Ambedkar felt that caste system wrought injustice to the lower caste by denying them basic human rights and preventing them from rising to the cultural level of higher castes. So the untouchables remained uncivilized and backward. This prevented the feeling of fraternity in Indian society. The lower caste were not treated as equals in society and were discriminated against as untouchables. Untouchability, according to Ambedkar, meant the imposition of social disabilities on a person by reason of their birth into a certain caste. They were prohibited from using public roads, wells, schools, shops, and other public utilities. They were not allowed to come into the mainstream of social life. The upper castes treated them as lowly and polluting groups. According to Ambedkar, 'untouchability is the notion of defilement, pollution, contamination and the ways and means of getting rid of that defilement. It is a case of permanent, hereditary stain which nothing can cleanse'. Thus, the practice of untouchability reinforced inequality and Ambedkar foresaw that only a casteless society that has inner strength can defend itself and also attain the goal of independence. The solution that Ambedkar proposed was the 'annihilation of caste'. He suggested inter-caste marriage and inter-dining for the purpose although the latter by itself is too weak to forge any enduring bonds. Further, he felt that hereditary priesthood should be abolished and it should 'remain open to all the co-religionists endowed with appropriate qualifications as certified by the state'. He felt that the Hindus would not accept these suggestions.

NOTES

NOTES

Ambedkar saw and studied that the social and economic conditions of the untouchable people were very deplorable and pitiable. The poverty along with untouchability ruined their life. He started his mission to uplift them to the level of human beings. He advocated that their social and economic conditions must be improved and they should not be treated as untouchables. He stood firmly for their human rights and for a respectful place for them in Hindu society. Ambedkar knew that unless the depressed classes did not get their share in the political power, their subjugation would not end. In the second 'Round Table Conference' Ambedkar succeeded in convincing the British authorities of the need for a separate electorate for the depressed classes and got it. A separate electorate would mean that untouchables would vote for their own candidates and be allotted their votes separate from the Hindu majority. The 'McDonald Award', known as 'Communal Award', granted the depressed classes separate electorate. Gandhi felt that separate electorate would separate the Harijans from the Hindus. The thought that the Hindus would be divided pained him grievously. Gandhi vehemently criticized the principle of separate electorate and began to fast unto death against it. It created a political stir in the country. Ambedkar was threatened with dire consequences, if Gandhi died. In order to save the life of Mahatma Gandhi, Ambedkar signed the agreement known as Poona Pact, on 24th September 1931. This agreement scrapped the separate electorates.

Due to public pressure and the persuasion by national leaders, Ambedkar finally agreed to be satisfied with greater representation through reservation instead of separate electorate. Gail Omvedt in her article, *Dalits: Miles To Go* wrote, '...even though he accepted the compromise of the Poona Pact, he believed till the end that the elected Dalits would simply become stooges of the upper caste-dominated parties.' Disturbed by Gandhi's attitude towards untouchables, Ambedkar wrote a book entitled *Annihilation of Caste* and made a historic announcement at Yeola that the untouchables would denounce the Hindu society to accept another religion.

In October 1936, Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party as he felt the need for having a political organization for the labourers and the depressed. It struggled for attaining human status for the workers belonging to the depressed classes. The party won 15 out of 17 seats in the Bombay Provincial Assembly elections and Ambedkar himself got elected in it. In 1942, he was nominated as a member of the Governor General's Executive by the British Government, as in-charge of the Labour department. In 1946, Ambedkar founded the People's Education Society which started a number of schools and colleges for the students of depressed classes. In August 1947, he was elected as the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee. When India became independent, Ambedkar became the first law minister of independent India. He once said that he took charge of the above posts not for any individual gain but to safeguard the larger interest of the depressed classes.

3.7 AMBEDKAR AS THE CHIEF ARCHITECT OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

As stated above, the Constituent Assembly made Ambedkar the Chairman of the Drafting Committee to draft the Constitution for an independent India. It was a rare honour for an 'untouchable' in India. His study of law, economics and politics, international level exposures and experiences within the nation made him the right person for this task. Nehru recognized his talent and constitutional knowledge. Ambedkar studied the

Check Your Progress

18. Name two features of the caste system.
19. What does Saddhamma mean?
20. Name two solutions that Ambedkar suggested for the formation of a caste less society.
21. Which legislature passed by the British awarded the untouchables with a separate electorate?
22. Why was the Poona Pact signed?

NOTES

Constitutions of many countries and reflected on them from the Indian context. He also coordinated the thoughts of other members of the Draft Committee and brought out the best for India. In spite his deteriorating health, after working day and night, he brought the work to completion. His sincere effort was to make the Constitution truly democratic, republican and secularist. The Constitution has the impression of Ambedkar's philosophy of life inherent in the principle of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. To the best of his ability, he safeguarded the interest of the depressed classes. He stressed the need for parliamentary democracy along with state socialism for the welfare of all. That is why he was called 'the Chief Architect of the Constitution'.

Social justice is the signature tune of the Indian Constitution. Ambedkar as the Chairman of the drafting committee acted in the best interest of the depressed classes by introducing laws and Acts for the promotion of social justice. Ambedkar proceeded on the assumption that justice will not be done to the depressed classes by an orthodox Hindu majority in free India, therefore, for a healthy growth of society the depressed classes must have separate electorate along with special constitutional safeguards and protection. It was largely due to Ambedkar's efforts for the cause of the depressed classes that the framers of Indian Constitution provided special safeguards in favour of scheduled castes, scheduled Tribes and other backward classes. They wished to give special favours to the weaker sections and also bid goodbye to casteism and communalism. Protective discrimination is aimed at balancing the benefits of a social welfare state between the haves and have-nots. It was primarily designed to uplift the backward sections of the society without harming the interests of the advanced sections of the society. Thus, Ambedkar wanted to lay down the foundation of a just and secular society which he thought was necessary for the creation of an ethos in which depressed classes can feel safe and secure. Emphasis was laid on this because our struggle for freedom has not only been political but also economic and social. The task of democracy would be fulfilled only by achieving the social and economic dimensions of democracy. Ambedkar opined that, 'the first condition which I think is a condition precedent for the successful working of a democracy is that there must be no glaring inequalities in the society. There must not be an oppressed class. There must not be a class which has got all the privileges and a class which has got all the burdens to carry...'. Its spirit was reflected in the *Directive Principles of State Policy* of the Constitution. Thus, we see that Ambedkar included in the Constitution all his dreams through the *Directive Principles of the State Policy*. His social thoughts are reflected in the fundamental rights. Ambedkar had to compromise his vision with many other forces such as recommendations of various committees and the policies of the Congress Party. Nevertheless, in spite of these compromises what he was able to achieve for the minority depressed classes was very significant.

Ambedkar also wanted to reform the entire Hindu society and for that purpose, he prepared and introduced the Hindu Code Bill in Parliament on 5th February 1951. The concept of social justice that Ambedkar envisioned was incomplete without emancipation of women. In his vision of the constitutional scheme, women had a definite place as had the depressed classes as a whole. He was a champion of women's rights and felt instinctively that the weaker sections and weaker sex in India had a common platform of protest. He fought vigorously for the passage of this bill as it was most significant for women's rights in respect of marriage and inheritance. But it could not be passed due to the opposition of the conservative Hindu Congress Members of the Parliament. Although a member of Nehru-cabinet, he always expressed independent views regarding the fate of the downtrodden masses. He, at times, criticized the

NOTES

Government for not doing much for these people. It had already created some difference between him and Prime Minister Nehru. Ultimately, when the Hindu Code Bill was not passed in the Parliament, he resigned from the Cabinet on September 27, 1951.

Dr. Ambedkar, who was reverentially called Babasaheb, had an uncanny ability to attract the downtrodden to his presence. He spoke the language of people and so he was easily understood by the common man. The mighty and the lowly, the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the illiterate and the educated all thronged to listen to him, because he had fought for their dignity, liberty and equality. His mission in life was to awaken the oppressed masses, to educate them and make them rise and fight for their respectful place in the society. He was able to bring about qualitative changes in their life. Therefore, we can sum up that his life was really a dedication and service to that part of humanity which had been ignored and crushed for centuries in our country. Ambedkar dreamt of a strong and united India, an India of peace, prosperity and progress and an India in which political, social and economic freedoms were available to all without any discrimination on the grounds of caste, religion or sex.

However, in spite the efforts initiated by Ambedkar, even after six decades of democratic functioning there are still excluded groups in India who face marginalization. Even though under Nehru's leadership, a path of gradual social transformation leading to a more egalitarian society was aimed for, lack of education, employment, caste based economic discrimination, and so on, resulted in a substantial level of marginalization and exclusion of some disadvantaged sections in India after independence. A section of them still continue to pursue traditional caste occupations such as weaving along with agriculture. Though some of them are employed well, their number is relatively very small. In the social realm a group of people still suffer from exclusion and their dwellings are located in rural areas and slums and many of them are denied even basic amenities.

As stated by Sudha Pai in her article *Disadvantages Sections: Process of Continuity and Change*, 'PD (Protective Discrimination) enshrined in the Constitution aimed at inclusion of SCs into society and polity, promoting participation and providing protection against discrimination. But the unequal economic structure of society reinforced by uneven distribution of gains in the post-independence period, under a predominantly capitalist system of development meant that a small "creamy layer" has made use of the opportunities'. This points to the fact that though there are some significant changes taking place for greater inclusion of marginalized groups this is affecting only a small section of the groups while a vast majority still suffers from exclusion. Very often we come across instances of caste oppression, exploitation of tribals, dalits and women and this gives us a clear picture of social exclusion in our country.

The marginalized and excluded groups can overcome their difficulties only if they are made aware of their rights and provided with dignity and self-confidence through education and political empowerment so that they can assert themselves against the domination and oppression they are subjected to. This was made clear by Ms. Neelam Pathania when she stated that, 'In the Indian context, social justice meant taking of collective measures for the upliftment of the down-trodden and the weaker sections like women, which could not be achieved merely by providing for, or conceding them equal rights; something more was needed to bring them at par with other sections of the society, like, for instance, equitable distribution of wealth, and allied measures, to ensure their economic independence, provision of free education, and all sorts of encouragement for them to acquire the same, so that their vision is widened to look at the world around,

and a desire to live a dignified life of a human being is originated in them, and they themselves are psychologically prepared to treat themselves equal to any other human being, and all such measures as may promote their participation in the legislative, administrative and judicial processes of the country, till, of course, they are in a position to compete on their own, so that they consider and treat themselves to be a part of the system'. If we want them to contribute to the development of the nation and to the reconstruction of the society it becomes imperative that the disequilibrium suffered by them is removed. What is needed at present is education in a real sense, which can help to change the very attitude of the people by broadening their mental horizons. A comprehensive democracy including social and economic democracy along with political democracy as envisaged by Ambedkar will enable us to meet this challenge and help us to improve the conditions of the marginalized and excluded groups.

3.8 DISPARITY IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL VIEWS OF GANDHI AND AMBEDKAR

Ambedkar and Gandhi started work for the eradication of untouchability and social evils existing in the society around the same period and they even worked together for a short spell. Gandhi was a towering figure in Indian politics and Ambedkar had great respect for him for he effectively voiced the concerns of the downtrodden and espoused the removal of untouchability. Ambedkar agreed with Gandhi on the issue of non-violence. He, like Gandhi, stood firm on the issue of purity of means, which to him was an important differentiating feature between Buddhism and Marxism. Both Gandhi and Ambedkar regarded religion as necessary for men and society. The concept of religion, for Ambedkar however, is quite different from the traditional one. The traditional meaning of religion is a belief in the supernatural. But Ambedkar did not consider the concept of God, soul and heaven as essential to a religion. Like Gandhi, human morality is the soul of Ambedkar's concept of religion. Both of them were humanists and great champions of the downtrodden masses. Both of them looked at the problem of untouchability from two different viewpoints. Gandhi had a keen sense of justice and human dignity, but it was conditioned by his religious convictions. Ambedkar's views were shaped by personal experience of the inequalities of the caste system. He had personally suffered the humiliations and insults meted out to an untouchable by a caste ridden society. So he initiated activities through his own separate and distinct platform.

Though Gandhi opposed the practice of untouchability, he thought that it had no connection with the caste system. Till 1922, he supported the caste system. Ambedkar quotes Gandhi on this issue, 'I believe that Hindu society has been able to stand because it is founded on the caste system. Caste has a readymade means for spreading primary education, caste has a political basis. Caste can perform judicial function. I believe that inter-dining or inter-marriages are not necessary for promoting national unity. The caste system cannot be said to be bad because it does not allow inter-dining or inter-marriage between different castes. To destroy caste system and adopt Western European social system means that Hindus must give up the principle of hereditary occupation which is the soul of caste system. The caste system is a natural order of society. This being my view I am opposed to all those who are out to destroy the caste system'. But later Gandhi became critical of caste system and suggested an alternate to it. He said, 'The best remedy is that small castes should fuse themselves into a big caste. There should be four such big castes so that we may reproduce the old system of four varnas'. But

NOTES

Check Your Progress

23. What is protective discrimination aimed at?
24. Why did Ambedkar introduce the Hindu Code Bill in 1951?
25. Why did Ambedkar resign from the Cabinet in 1951?

NOTES

Gandhi's concept of varna system is based on the principle of hereditary occupation. He had faith in the varna system and did not think it essential to end the varna system to eradicate the practice of untouchability. He considered the varna system as an ideal form of social organization.

To Gandhi, varna does not stand for any inequality. He views all varnas as equal because they are all important for the community. This system brings material well-being to society and spiritual freedom to individuals, according to Gandhi. As he believed in the spiritual oneness of all life, he opposed untouchability and considered it an impassable barrier in the path of India's progress. For Gandhi, *swaraj* was not possible without the removal of untouchability as for him the definition of *swaraj* was, 'freedom for the nearest of our countrymen'. He wrote, 'An untouchable is outside the pale of respectable society. He is hardly treated as a human being. He is an outcaste hurled into an abyss by his fellow-being occupying the same platform. The difference, therefore, is somewhat analogous to the difference between heaven and hell'. He viewed this as a moral problem.

As a practical social reformer, Gandhi pointed out that inter-dining or inter-caste marriage does not help in the removal of untouchability. He strongly felt that the real cure lies in bringing about a change of heart in society. That is why he was not enthusiastic about popularizing these practices. He was also against the operating of separate schools or institutions for Harijans as these further perpetuate feelings of separation and inferiority. Gandhi also disapproved of the idea of a separate electorate for untouchables for he believed that the untouchables were part of the Hindu society and a separate electorate may divide the Hindu society.

Ambedkar, on the other hand, considered caste and the caste system as the major weakness of Hinduism. He believed that it was not merely based on a division of labour. It was a division of labourers into unnatural and watertight compartments. It disorganized and demoralized the Hindus. Ambedkar argued that social evils like sati, child-marriage and prohibition on widow-remarriage were the outcome of the caste system. He was against the graded inequality underlying the caste system. He was to caste initially and later opposing it while still upholding varna. Ambedkar, however, felt that the principle underlying Gandhi's conception of varna was the same as that of caste, i.e., assigning social agents on the basis of birth rather than worth. According to him, *chaturvarna* divided the society into castes and sub-castes and they lost open door character and became self-enclosed units. Prohibition of inter-marriages or endogamy further accentuated the caste divisions. Gail Omvedt observed, 'On the question of caste, Ambedkar directly challenged both Gandhi and Nehru and other socialists. He saw Gandhi's project of reforming caste and eradicating untouchability but maintaining *swadharma* as illusory; *Ramarajya* was to him simply medieval backwardness'. One of Ambedkar's most important arguments against Hinduism was untouchability because it did not let Hindus act as a community. Ambedkar initially believed that Gandhian intervention would push forward the social reforms agenda. But later he realized that Gandhi had succumbed to the pressures of traditional beliefs and instead of social transformation became the agent of orthodoxy. Ambedkar felt that Gandhi's strategy for the abolition of untouchability placed the 'untouchability' at the behest of the caste Hindus. Later, their relation worsened and after 1933, Ambedkar fought a relentless battle against Gandhi, although they continued to share a number of concerns.

Ambedkar was fighting for the recognition that 'untouchables' were a separate element in India, and therefore, should be provided with appropriate constitutional safeguards. He suggested his own strategies to confront untouchability and always warned the untouchables not to fall into the trap of Gandhism. He exhorted them to fight for

political power. He aimed at securing political power for the untouchables. He demanded rightful representation of the depressed classes in the legislative council and demanded a separate electorate for them in the 'First Round Table Conference'. However, Gandhi disapproved of the idea of a separate electorate for untouchables as he believed that it would only divide the Hindu society further and began a fast unto death against this till this idea was scrapped. Instead, a provision for a reserved joint electorate was put forward to give a larger share of seats to the depressed classes than what was promised by the communal award. But Ambedkar's dislike towards the Congress and Gandhi continued. He felt that the issue of untouchability and the caste system had been relegated to the background by the Congress. He started work outside the Congress party and his views in this regard were expressed in his works, *What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables* and *Mr. Gandhi and the Emancipation of the Untouchable*. These works familiarize one with Ambedkar's reservations about Gandhi's prescriptions towards the problems faced by the depressed classes. He was opposed to the paternalistic attitude of Gandhi and other Congress leaders towards the depressed classes and he repeatedly stated that the Congress had done nothing to help these people in their struggle against the Hindu orthodoxy. He was against the Gandhian suggestion of treating untouchability as a religious problem, but in no way did he want any division within the Hindus for the greater cause of political emancipation. To him, more than untouchability, it was important to understand the problem of untouchability. He therefore demanded a special electorate for the depressed classes so that they would select their own representation in the legislative bodies to protect their interests.

Ambedkar held that political democracy in India required as education, enlightenment, elevation of the lower classes and the guarantee of the fundamental rights to them without which *swaraj* would be a new slavery for them. He asserted that without fulfilling these conditions, India would not be called a democracy. He always defended democracy as it was capable of bringing out revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people without bloodshed. But he pointed out that for the operation and survival of democracy, the people should hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving social and economic objectives. It meant abandoning the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and Satyagraha. He viewed democracy as a mode of associated living in which there would be no discrimination on social and economic grounds. It should be supported by the social base that is essential for its successful operation.

One of the solutions suggested by Ambedkar for the removal of caste barriers and untouchability in the Hindu society was inter-caste marriages and inter-dining, although the latter by itself is too weak a method to forge any enduring bonds. He called upon the Hindus to annihilate the caste barrier which is a great hindrance to social solidarity and to set up a new social order based on the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. He suggested inter-caste marriages as one of the solutions to the problem. He firmly believed that if the caste Hindus are freed from the thraldom of the *shastras* and their minds are cleaned of the perpetual notions founded on the *shastras*, they would inter-dine and inter-marry without any hesitation. Thus, he held that society must be based on reason and not on the deplorable traditions of the caste system. And this, he reiterated, was only possible by the education of the masses. As it is stated by Neelam Pathania, 'Ambedkar had the vision of a statesman. He could realize that the cherished goal of freedom movement could not be achieved, and if achieved, the accomplishment could not be lasting, unless every section of the society was integrated in mind and conduct, and that was not possible unless the downtrodden and depressed classes were assured equality

NOTES

3.10 SUMMARY

NOTES

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Dr. Bhimrao Ramjee Ambedkar was well-known not only as the chief architect of the Constitution or as a legal luminary, but also as a great activist and reformist, a disciplined radical and revolutionary.
- Ambedkar continuously fought against evil and dreaded customs, blind beliefs and superstitions of the Hindu society.
- Ambedkar planned his programmes to bring the downtrodden millions of India from a state of dehumanization and slavery into one of equality through the use of modern methods based on education and the exercise of legal and political rights.
- Ambedkar was influenced by Indian as well as western intellectual and moral ideas of many great thinkers like Gautam Buddha, Jyotiba Phule, John Dewey (his mentor at Columbia University), Karl Marx, Justice Ranade, etc.
- Ambedkar had great reverence for the life and message of Buddha. He appreciated Lord Buddha's belief in man's capacity to work out his salvation without extraneous aid.
- Both Gandhi and Ambedkar were heroic and the very embodiment and symbols of revolt against the unjust social order existing in India. Both were critical of the evils of the Hindu social system, especially untouchability and were determined to uproot the evils while leaving the foundations of Indian culture undisturbed.
- In Ambedkar's ideological map, democracy occupied the critical place. He was a true and sincere democrat and his major contribution to political thinking was to focus the relevance of social democracy to political democracy.
- Ambedkar was a great admirer of the parliamentary system of government till 1947, but later he thought that a non-parliamentary executive would suit India better. He pointed out that the representative nature of the executive did not necessarily ensure the right to the minorities.
- Ambedkar wanted a change in the life pattern of the untouchables and he knew that without political rights and political power, the elevation of the depressed classes would not be possible.
- Ambedkar repeatedly stated that power was necessary to protect the rights of the people. He held that right must exist before the power is set up and it would be serious error to reverse the order of precedence.
- The concept of religion, for Ambedkar is quite different from the traditional one. The traditional meaning of religion is some sort of belief in supernatural power. He did not consider the concept of God, soul and heaven as essential to religion.
- The rigid orthodoxy of Hinduism led Ambedkar to give up any hope of reforming it and to advocate Buddhist Dhamma instead.
- In Ambedkar's view the real remedy to untouchability is to replace the social relations governed by the caste system of Hinduism by the one based on equality, justice and fraternity.
- Ambedkar analyzed the basic tenets of Buddhism in his magnum opus – *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, published posthumously in 1957.

NOTES

- Ambedkar wrote it with the intention of creating a single text for new Buddhists to read and follow. It is a true guide for all the Buddhists. It is the best basis for propagating the Dhamma at least in India.
- According to Ambedkar/ one of the major weaknesses of Hinduism is caste system and its untouchability. He believed that the caste system is not merely division of labour and it has disorganized and demoralized the Hindus.
- Ambedkar found the caste system an outdated, impracticable, irrational and a superstitious social practice and he set the annihilation of caste as his goal.
- Ambedkar felt that unless the depressed classes do not get share in the political power, their subjugation would not end. In 1918 he demanded separate electorate to the untouchables.
- The Constitution was a reflection of Ambedkar's philosophy of life inherent in the principles of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity and he sought to safeguard the interests of the depressed classes to the best of his ability. That is why he was called the 'Chief Architect of the Constitution.'
- In spite of the efforts initiated by Ambedkar, even after six decades of democratic functioning since independence there are still excluded groups in India who still face marginalization.
- There was a common ground for Gandhi and Ambedkar in their concern for the problems of untouchability, and they worked for its eradication, it was just that their methodologies differed.
- Though Gandhi opposed the practice of untouchability, he thought that it had no connection with Hindu social organization, namely, the caste system.
- Gandhi did not believe that inter-dining or inter-caste marriages would help in the removal of untouchability. He strongly felt that the real cure lies in the change of heart. One of the solutions suggested by Ambedkar for the removal of caste and untouchability in the Hindu society was inter-caste marriages and inter-dining.
- Ambedkar, on the other hand, considered caste and caste system as the major weakness of Hinduism. He believed that it was not merely a division of labour.
- Gandhi disapproved of the idea of a separate electorate for untouchables as he believed that it would divide the Hindu society.
- Ambedkar sought a legal remedy to their social problems and to remove social inequalities and achieve the goal of social justice he devised the reservation system into the Constitution.
- An important approach to the study of tribal movements has been suggested by Ranajit Guha. This approach has been termed as subaltern historiography.

3.11 KEY TERMS

- **Caste system:** A hierarchically arranged social division of labour which is determined by the birth of a person.
- **Untouchables:** In Hindu society those who did not belong to the upper caste groups were called outcastes and they were made to carry out the menial work of society.
- **Meliorist:** A doctrine that the world may be improved by human effort.

NOTES

- **Rationalism:** Any philosophy magnifying the role played by unaided reason, in the acquisition and justification of knowledge.
- **Conservative:** One who desires to preserve institutions of his country against change and innovation.
- **Ostracism:** It refers to social boycotting.
- **Orthodoxy:** It means holding conventional or currently accepted beliefs especially in religion.

3.12 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Three people who influenced Ambedkar were Gautam Buddha, John Dewey and Jyotiba Phule.
2. Ambedkar borrowed his notion of social liberty from Booker T. Washington.
3. Mahatma Jotiba Phule was considered to be the Martin Luther of Maharashtra.
4. The main goal that Ambedkar and Gandhi had in common was the abolishment of untouchability.
5. Two salient points required for the successful working of a democracy are, there must be no glaring inequality in society and there should be an effective opposition party to keep the party in power in check.
6. Ambedkar was a great admirer of the Parliamentary system of Government till 1947.
7. Ambedkar considered non-parliamentary executive a better alternative to the Parliamentary system for India.
8. Ambedkar wanted the untouchables to have political representation and also educate themselves so that they were aware of their rights.
9. Ambedkar believed that development of the industrial sector was necessary to reduce the surplus labour in agriculture and to create favourable conditions for production.
10. The main feature of Ambedkar's model of democratic socialism was that basic freedom to the individual vis-à-vis the State to be guaranteed by the Constitution.
11. Ambedkar's main criticism was that there was hardly ever any reflective thought to be found in Hinduism. They just blindly followed the writings in their literature, where nothing was based on any fathomable reason.
12. Ambedkar did not consider the concept of God, soul and heaven as essential to religion. For him, human morality was the basis of a religion.
13. Ambedkar's main criticism was that Hinduism never adheres to the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity and practices partiality towards some of its followers.
14. K.A. Keluskar, presented Ambedkar a book called *Life of Gautama Buddha* and introduced Ambedkar to Buddha and his teachings.
15. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism on 14th October 1956.
16. Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha are the Triple Gems of Buddhism.
17. The Buddha and His Dhamma was published posthumously in 1957.

NOTES

18. Two features of the caste system are first, that it is based on hierarchy and second, there is a lack of unrestricted choice of occupation.
19. Saddharma means the eradication and amelioration of all social barriers between man.
20. Inter-caste marriage and inter-dining were two solutions Ambedkar suggested for the formation of a caste less society.
21. The McDonald award awarded the untouchables with a separate electorate.
22. The Poona Pact was signed by Ambedkar agreeing to scrap the separate electorates.
23. Protective discrimination is aimed at balancing the benefits of a social welfare state between the haves and have-nots.
24. Ambedkar introduced the Hindu Code Bill to help reform the entire Hindu society.
25. Ambedkar resigned from the Cabinet in 1951 due to differences with Nehru and the scrapping of the Hindu Code Bill was the last straw.
26. Reservation is a unique device introduced into the Constitution. It sought protective discrimination in favour of certain castes and class of persons.
27. Mahatma Gandhi opposed Ambedkar's demand for a separate electorate for untouchables.
28. To establish an egalitarian society, Gandhi wanted to abolish untouchability and Ambedkar wanted to do away with the caste system.

3.13 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the requirements of a successful democracy according to Ambedkar?
2. State the main features of Ambedkar's model of democratic socialism as summed up by Bhalachandra Mungekar.
3. What was Ambedkar's concept of religion?
4. Give reasons for Ambedkar wanting a separate electorate for the untouchables.
5. Differentiate between Gandhi and Ambedkar's viewpoints of untouchability.
6. Why was Gandhi not keen to popularize inter-marriage and inter-dining?
7. Why did Gandhi disapprove of the idea of a separate electorate?
8. What is subaltern historiography?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Examine the role of reason in the philosophy of Ambedkar.
2. Critically examine Ambedkar's views on religion, especially his view on Buddhism.
3. 'Dr. Ambedkar's humanism has been a movement for social freedom of the oppressed and exploited'. Substantiate your views.
4. What was the effect of Marxism on the philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar?
5. Critically examine Ambedkar's views on caste and untouchability.



INSTITUTE
OF DISTANCE
EDUCATION **IDE**
Rajiv Gandhi University

Institute of Distance Education

Rajiv Gandhi University

A Central University

Rono Hills, Arunachal Pradesh

Contact us:



+91-98638 68890



Ide Rgu



Ide Rgu



helpdesk.ide@rgu.ac.in



**INSTITUTE
OF DISTANCE
EDUCATION** **IDE**
Rajiv Gandhi University

Institute of Distance Education Rajiv Gandhi University

A Central University

Rono Hills, Arunachal Pradesh

Contact us:

 +91-98638 68890

 Ide Rgu

 Ide Rgu

 helpdesk.ide@rgu.ac.in