

**Karl Marx**

*Historical materialism, Mode of Production, Alienation and Class Struggle.*

**LONG ANSWER TYPE**

Q. 1. 'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle' critically examine on the Marxist thesis.

Ans. : The statement, "*The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle*" is the opening sentence of Karl Marx's *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. The concept of class is the central idea of Marxian ideology. The word "class" has been used by him in two different senses. The first is the sociological sense in which class is viewed as a group sharing same relation to the means of production; Thus, in this sense, all societies except the most primitive have had two main classes; namely, that consisting of the *owner* of the means of production; and that consisting of *non-owners*. This class division results as a consequences of the development of the institution of private property. The second is the descriptive sense in which the society is classified into the various class according to same criteria. Thus in his "*Revolution and counter Revolution in Germany*", Marx distinguishes 7 classes—the *feudal landlord, the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, the rich and the middle peasant, the poor peasant, the proletariat* and the *lumpen proletariat*. The first sense of Marx about the class is very significant here to describe the class struggle in the long historical period.

Marx found that the class that owns the means of production' would have a vested interest in preserving the existing social relations and institutions, so that it can perpetuate its dominance. While those who are deprived of the ownership of 'means of production' would be interested in transforming the existing social relations. As a result of this antagonism the class-conflict makes its departure. During the conflict period, each class tries or makes struggle to realise its goal. Whenever a class makes conscious effort to preserve and alter the existing system or mode of production, Marx has termed it "*Class for*

*itself*". He argues that it is essential for a struggling class to makes systematic planning, policies, ideology, scientific and conscious efforts to get the desired goal. For example if a working class in the capitalist society make conscious effort against the bourgeoisie to overcome his exploitation, it is termed as "*class for itself*". On the other hand, if a class is not able to make conscious effort and awareness about its existence, it is termed as a "*class in itself*". Marx has pointed out that "Class for itself" sentiments works as a catalyst of the class struggle.

The nature of class struggle in different societies at different point of time has been described by Karl Marx in a historical sense. All the hitherto existing societies have been divided by him into the four types; the *Asiatic society, the Ancient society, the feudal society* and the *capitalist society*. He has also made prediction about the coming of *socialist society*. The first, Asiatic society was classless. The remaining three is characterized by two classes in each. Thus, in the *Ancient society, "masters' and slaves"*, in the *feudal society "feudal lords and serfs"*, and in the capitalist society "*bourgeoisie and proletariat*", are the main classes. Thus, according to Marx, it is the Ancient, feudal and capitalist society which are the battle ground of the class struggle.

Firstly, in the Ancient society "masters and slaves" were the two rival classes. The entire means and modes of production were owned by the masters. They are considered noble and aristocratic in nature and character. Since, they were the owner of the means and the mode of production, they used to enjoy the high quality luxurious life. They were dominating antagonistic and exploitative to the slave. The masters always made struggle to continue on their status and existence, on the other hand, the "slaves" were the bonded labour who used to make courageous efforts to overcome their exploitation by the master. They were alienated from

any human right. When they become conscious of class for itself, they tried to throw out the master. But at the same time master also tried to maintain their dominance. Thus, the class struggle continued.

Secondly, the "Feudal Society" was characterised by the "Feudal lords" and "Serf". Pointing out to capitalist society Marx and Engels said that just as capitalist exploited the workers or the proletariat, so did the feudal lords exploit their tenants or serfs. Capitalists grabbed surplus value and feudal lords appropriated land rents from their serfs. Serfs being legally unfree, were deprived of the property rights, though they could use the lord's property. They were obliged to surrender their labour, or the product of their labour, over and above what was needed for family subsistence and the simple production in a peasant household economy. Serfs were forced to fulfil the economic demands of an overlord. The demands could be in the form of services to be performed. These could also be in the form of services to be paid in the money or kind. The dues or the taxes were levied on the family holding of the peasants. The feudal lord was able to force serfs on the basis of military strength. The power was also backed by the force of law. Thus, there were the direct, antagonistic and exploitative relation between these two classes. The masters used to make struggle to preserve their status while the serfs used to struggle to break free from their exploitation.

Thirdly, in the capitalist society, the class struggle has become very intense. The present society is the capitalist society, the seeds of which were sown during the feudal period. In this period the exchange of manufactured and agricultural product in regional market, international trade route, mercantile centres and the rise of church officials etc. gave impetus to the rise of the capitalist society. According to Marx, there are two prominent classes in the capitalist society. The first is the capitalist or *bourgeoisie* and second is the *proletariat* or working class. The capitalist owns the capital which may be in the form of money, or credit for the purchase of labour power and materials of production. The working class or proletariat sell their labour power to the capitalist for their existence or survival. Marx has used the term '*alienation of proletariat*' for them. They are terribly exploited by the capitalist. The surplus production is made by him but they are not able to get even a part of it. Thus, on the

one hand, capitalist makes struggle to maintain their status quo whereas the proletariat makes struggle to recover from the exploitative clutches of the capitalist. Both become conscious to their interest. There have been a conflicting relationship and persistent struggle between these two oppressor and oppressed classes.

Thus, on the basis of the above facts, Marx has aptly remarked that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class-struggle".

**Q. 2. Critically bring out the difference in the approach of Karl Marx and Max Weber to the study of class-structure in industrial capitalist society".**

**Ans. :** The study of class and class-structure in the industrial capitalist society has been critically interpreted by Karl Marx and Max Weber. They are the chief propounder of the class theory, division and structure in the industrial capitalist society. There are similarities as well as differences in the ideas of Karl Marx and Max Weber about the structure of class.

From a Marxian view, a class is a social group whose members share the same relation to the means or forces of production. Marx has used the term to refer to the main strata in the stratification system. Marx believed that the western society had developed through the four main epochs; *primitive communism, ancient society, feudal society and the capitalist society*. Primitive communism is represented by the society of prehistory and provide only example of the classless society. From then, all societies are divided into two major classes; the *masters and slaves in the ancient society, lords and serfs in the feudal society and capitalist and wage-earners in the capitalist society*.

In the Marxian term, Bourgeoisie and Proletariat are the two main rival classes in the industrial capitalist society. They both are dependent on one another. The wage earner or proletariat sells his labour power to survive, he does not own a part of the forces of production and lacks the means to produce goods independently. He is therefore, dependent for his livelihood on the capitalist and wage they offer. However, the mutual relationship between these two classes is not symmetrical, rather the exploiter and exploited type of relationship is found. In fact, the ruling class gains at the expense of the subject class. Thus, therefore a conflict of interest between them. Marx argues that capital produces nothing, only labour produces wealth. The

an expansion of the white collar middle class rather than class polarisation. Weber reflects the views held by Marx and some Marxists, of the inevitability of the proletarian revolution. He sees no reason why those sharing similar class situation should necessarily develop a common identity, recognise shared interests and take collective action to further their interest. For example, Weber suggests that the individual manual worker who is dissatisfied with his class situation may respond in a variety of ways. He may grumble, work to rule, sabotage industrial machinery, go on strike or he may attempt to organise others members of his class in an effort to overthrow capitalism. Thus, proletariat revolution is only one of the possibilities, in fact a rare possibility.

Finally, Weber rejects the Marxian view that political power necessary derives from economic power, and the distribution of class inequalities correspond to distribution of power inequalities.

Thus, there is a remarkable difference of views of the Marxian and Weberian ideologies on the structure of class in the industrial capitalist society.

**Q. 3. Explain Karl Marx's theory of social stratification. On what ground functionalists refute it?**

**Ans. :** Marxian perspective provide a radical alternative to functionalist views of the nature of social stratification. They regard stratification as a divisive rather than an integrative structure. They see it as a mechanism whereby some exploit others rather than a means of furthering collective goals. They focus on social strata rather than social inequality in general. Functionalists such as Parsons and Davis and Moore say little about social stratification in the sense of clearly defined social strata whose members have shared interests. However, this view of social stratification is central to Marxian theory.

According to Marx, in all stratified societies there are two major classes- a *ruling class* and a *subject class*. The power of the ruling class derives from its ownership and control of the forces of production. The ruling class exploit and oppress the subject class.

From a Marxian perspective the system of stratification derive from the relationship of social group to the forces of production. Marx used the term class to refer to the main strata in all stratification system. From a Marxian view, class is a social group whose members share the same relationship to the forces of production. Thus during the feudal epoch,

there were two main classes distinguished by their relationship to the land, the major forces of production. They are the feudal nobility who own the land and the landless serfs who work on the land. Similarly, in the capitalist era, there are two main classes, the *bourgeoisie* or the capitalist class who owns the forces of production and the *proletariat* or the working class whose members own only their labour power. Thus according to Marx all societies; ancient, feudal and capitalist are characterized by two classes- the *oppressor* and the *oppressed*.

Marx has pointed out that the relationship between these two opposite classes are of mutual dependence and conflict. There is no symmetrical but a mutually exploiter and exploited type of relationship found between them.

Marx has argued that the entire infrastructure and superstructure of the society are owned by the ruling class. Thus, they propagate their own values, institutional set up and legal codes of conduct. They enjoy high prestige, power and status in the society. On the other hand, the subject class enjoys no power, prestige and status. They survive for their livelihood.

The functionalist theory of social stratification assumes a holistic perspective according to which there are certain basic needs or functional pre-requisite which must be met if the society is to survive. They therefore, look to social stratification to see how far it meets these functional prerequisites. According to Talcott Parson, those who perform successfully in terms of society's values will be ranked highly and they will be likely to receive a variety of rewards. They will be accorded high prestige since they personify common values. Since different societies have different value system, the ways of attaining high position will vary from society to society. According to Parson stratification is an invariable part of the society.

Unlike Marx, Functionalists tend to see the relationship between social group in society as one of cooperation and interdependence. The relationship between the different social groups is of the reciprocity. In societies with a high specialised division of labour, such as industrial societies, some members will specialize in organisation and planning, others would follow their directives. Talcott Parson argues that this inevitably leads to inequality in terms of power and prestige. Thus those with the power to organise and coordinate the activities of others will have higher social status than those they direct.

## SOCIOLOGY PAPER-I

Parson sees social stratification as both inevitable and functional for the society. It is inevitable because it derives from shared values which are a necessary part of the social system. It is functional because it serves to integrate various groups in the society. Power and prestige differential are essential for the coordination and integration of a specialised division of labour without social inequality, Parsons finds it difficult to see how members of society could effectively cooperate and work together.

Thus, Parsons has totally rejected the Marxian theory of social stratification, at the structural and functional level.

Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E Moore have argued that effective role allocation and performance are the basic part of social stratification. According to them some positions in societies are functionally more important than the others. They require special skills to their effective performance and there are limited number of individuals who possess this skill. Thus Davis and Moore conclude that social stratification is a device by which societies ensure the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons. They suggest that the importance of a position can be measured in two ways. Firstly, the degree to which a position is functionally unique, there being no position that can perform the same function satisfactorily. For example, a doctor's functions are more important than the nurse. The second measure is the degree to which the other positions are dependent on the others. Thus, it may be argued that the managers are more important than the routine office staff.

To Summarise Davis and Moore regard social stratification as functional necessity of all societies. They see it a solution to the problem faced by all social systems, that of placing and motivating individuals in social structure. They offer no other means to solve this problem and imply that social inequality is an inevitable features of human society. They conclude that differential rewards are functional for the society, that they contribute to the maintenance and well being of the social system.

In this way Davis and Moore have also rejected the Marxian notion of class; ruling and ruled, as the basis of stratification. Marx assumes that stratification is not invariable for the society. It is ruling class ideology which give birth to stratification for realisation of their interests.

Another functionalist thinker Melvin M. Tumin has rejected the assumption of Davis and Moore. He argues that some labour force of unskilled workman is as important and as indispensable to the factory as some labour force of the engineers. In fact, a number of sociologists have argued that there is no objective way of measuring the functional importance of positions. Thus, an industrial worker's function is as important as the managers. Tumin argues that the differences in pay and prestige between occupational group may be due to differences in power. He says that social class can act as an obstacle in motivating the talent and stratification is a divisive rather than integrative force.

Thus the functionalist ideas of social stratification is quite contrary to the Marxian views. The Marxian conception of class and its function in different societies have not been made consideration in the functionalist perspective. Secondly, Marx has highlighted, to a great extent, the structural aspect of the social stratification whereas functionalist is mainly interested in with the functional aspect of it.

### Q. 4. Critically examine Karl Marx's theory of Alienation.

**Ans. :** The word "alienation" simply means "the separation from". Marx has conceived of alienation as a phenomena related to the structure of those society in which the producer is divorced from the means of production and in which dead labour (capital) dominates living labour (the worker). For example, a shoe-maker manufactures the shoe, but cannot use them for himself. His creation thus becomes an object which is separate from him. He make shoes not because making shoes satisfies merely his urges to work and create. He does so to earn his living. Thus, it is a socio-psychological condition which denotes a state of 'estrangement' of individual from themselves or from others.

According to Marx, man is essentially a creative being who realises his essence and affirms himself in labour or production. A creative activity is carried out in cooperation with others and by which the external world is transformed. The process of production involves transformation of human creativity into material objects or objectification of human creative power. This process of objectification under the specific historical circumstances of capitalism, leads to alienation because in capitalism the means of production are owned and controlled by a few capitalists while the workers have no control.

According to Marx alienation manifests itself in four ways:

- (1) The worker is alienated from the product of his labour, since what he produces is appropriated by the capitalist and the worker has no control over it.
- (2) The worker is alienated from the act of production because all decisions as to how production is to be organised are taken by the capitalist. For the worker, labour ceases to offer an intrinsic satisfaction and instead becomes only a means for survival. It becomes a compulsion forced from without and is no more an end in itself. In fact, work becomes a commodity to be sold and its only value to the worker is saleability.
- (3) Man is distinguished from the animal by his creative ability to do labour, but to the above mentioned aspect of alienation, man loses his distinctly human quality and gets alienated from his real human nature. Prevalence of religion and belief in God as an independent power are the result of this self-estrangement of man. "*The more man puts into God, the less he retains of himself*". The capitalist system stratifies man, destroys the human qualities and renders man to a state worse than animal. No animal has to work for his survival at other's bidding while man has to do that in a capitalist system.
- (4) Further the worker in capitalist system is also socially alienated, because social relation become market relation in which each man is judged by his position in the market, rather than his human qualities. Capital accumulation generates its own norms which reduces people to the level of commodities. Workers become merely factors in the operation of capital and their activities are dominated by the requirement of profitability rather than by their human needs.

To sort out a solution to the alienated condition of man, Marx has suggested that man can be freed from his alienated existence only with the emergence of communist society wherein each man shall work to affirm himself rather than working for self-destruction.

The above mentioned ideas of Marx about alienation have been criticised by the sociologists. First, Max Weber disagreed with Marx regarding the fac-

tor leading to alienation and believed that alienation was an inevitable feature of modern industrial society irrespective of whether the means of production are owned privately or collectively. For Weber, the cause of alienation lies in the rationalisation of social life and predominance of bureaucratic organisation in modern industrial societies. The compulsive conformity to impersonal rules in bureaucratic organisation renders people into mere cog in the giant machine and destroy their human qualities. The American sociologists after World War-II have further changed the meaning of alienation to adapt it to contemporary advanced industrial societies.

Secondly, commenting on Marx, C.W. Mills assumed that the growth of tertiary (Service) sector in modern industrial societies has contributed to self alienation among the white collar (non-manual) workers. In these societies, 'skills with things' have been replaced by 'skill with persons' which the non-manual workers have to sell like commodities. Mills calls this a 'Personality market' since aspect of personality at work are false and insincere. Mills gave the example of girl working in department store, smiling, concerned and to the whims of the customer. He states that the sales girl becomes self-alienated in the course of work because her personality becomes the instrument of an alien purpose. At work she is not herself.

Thirdly, Herbert Marcuse, talking about work and leisure in advanced industrial societies, say that both work and leisure alienate people from their true selves. Work is 'Stupefying' and exhausting while leisure involves modes of relaxation which only soothe and prolong this stupefaction and it is largely a pursuit of false needs.

Fourthly, another criticism of Marxian concept of alienation is that of Sieman. He has tried to define alienation in a comprehensive way. He argued that alienation could be decomposed into five separate elements; *powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement*. However, Sieman simply treats them as subjective disposition, which can be measured with the help of attitude scale. Robert Blauner has further developed four of these conditions and has related them with different types of technology. He has plotted the relation between technology and alination in the form of an inverted U-curve. According to him level of alienation is low in craft industries like printing but it increases to high levels in assembly line indus-

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Thirdly, according to the Marxian notion of social change the basic contradiction contained in a capitalist economic system would lead to its eventual destruction. The Proletariat would overthrow the bourgeoisie and seize the forces of production, the sources of power and property would be communally owned and, since all members of the society now share same relation to the forces of production, a classless society would result.

Fourthly, according to Marx the, "Class-for-itself" sentiment that is, one's awareness, consciousness and subjective perception of the objective reality work as the catalyst in bringing social change in the society. At this stage, the members of a particular class unite and solidify themselves against the opposite class. Giving the example of capitalist society, Marx predicted that when the Proletariat or working class will become totally a "Class-for-itself", the Proletariat revolution will occur which will throw the existing capitalist society. The new society will be "Communist Society" which will be egalitarian and classless.

Thus, Marx's concept of social change is revolutionary or structural in nature. He perceived social change at broad level. According to him changes in the mode of production bring wider change in the relation of production. The entire infrastructure and superstructure of the society dramatically change as the mode of production changes.

Marx's theory of social change has raised debate among the sociologists. Firstly many sociologists claim that his social class and change theory provide the best explanation of nature of changes in the capitalist society. Secondly, much of the research on class has been inspired by ideas and questions raised by Marx. Thirdly, the class and social change concept of Marx have been proved equally useful for both the Marxist and non-Marxist thinkers. Commenting on Marx, T.B. Bottomore remarked, "For the past eighty years Marx theory of social change has been the object of unrelenting criticism and tenacious defence". The observation is still true.

**Q. 7. "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being but on the contrary it is their social being that determines their consciousness." Examine Karl Marx's notion of mode of production in light of this statement.**

**Ans. :** Karl Marx has comprehensively explained

the men's productive nature, their consciousness and the mechanism of forming relationship. He assumes that man is a social being and productive or creative by nature. He has described their productive nature and social being in the historical perspective. It has been observed by Marx that during the long period of history, the sociability in the men have been gradually increasing. As the social nature of man becomes more intensive and widespread, they become more conscious of their existence and creativity. He gives the example of primitive society and argues that during this epoch the men were more unsocial and uncivilised. These were the reason why they were not conscious and productive. But, during the later phase of the historical development, both the features; sociability and consciousness in them have changed drastically.

Initially the term "mode of production" is used by Marx to identify the primary element of a given historical stage of production by showing how its economic base shape social relation. In this sense, the way people actually produce and enter into social relationship with one another is called the 'mode of production' and this comprises a total way of life of society, its social activities and social institutions. Thus, according to Marx "Mode of Production" comprises the 'Forces of Production and 'Relation of Production. The forces of production may be taken to mean the instrument, equipment, land, tools etc. which are put to work for purpose of producing a livelihood. But these forces of production can only be put into operation when people in society enter into relation of production. The relation of production, therefore, are always about how the forces of production are to be used in order to produce, and one key idea stemming from the relations of production is that one class is the proprietor over these forces, the other being subject to them. Thus the relation of production involves the right of proprietors to control the labour of the producer and secondly to control the product of the labourer.

The notion of the 'mode of production', sociability and consciousness have been described by Marx during the three historical epoch of its development. These are the ancient, feudal and capitalistic epoch of society. Each society have been divided into the two classes; the exploiter and the exploited. In the ancient society the dominant class (masters) preside over the forces of production in

such a way that the relation of production entered into by the producer transforms them into slaves. This gives the dominant class the direct control over the product. According to Marx, this was resolved in the estrangement or deprivation of the slaves from their own products which, in turn, was a threat to their social existence. It had sowed the seeds of consciousness in them.

Similarly, in a feudal mode of production or society the landholders directly preside over the forces of production and have a right to control a portion of serfs' labour as well as the right over the serfs agricultural production. As a result of threat to their social being, the slaves began to solidify and organise themselves against the lords.

Thirdly, in the "Capitalist mode of production" or capitalist society, the capitalist has direct ownership over the forces of production including the land, machinery and materials and exercise a right over the disposition of the product of labour but does not exercise direct control over the labourer during the working day. In capitalism, it should be noted that the control existing in the dominant classes to

exercise right over labour and over the product migrate to the wage-form where the capitalist pays out in wages sufficiently less than the amount of wealth created by the workers. Marx assumes that this is gradually resulting in the process of solidarification and unification or class-for-itself sentiments among the working class or Proletariat. When they will become fully conscious, the capitalist would be overthrown and 'communist society or ideology will preside over the society.

On the basis of above mentioned arguments of Marx, it can be concluded that whenever, there are the threats to men's existence, they try to cope with them in a revolutionary way with full consciousness and unification. Thus Marx's notion that it is the social being of man that determine his consciousness is more apt rather than the notion of consciousness of the men which determine his unique adjustment to the society. Some of the psychologists have also objected it. Whatever happens, this conception of Marx has enriched the social thought and has added a dimensional change in the process of social investigation

### SHORT NOTES TYPE

#### Q. 1. Mode of production.

Ans. : According to Karl Marx, the mode of production refers to the nature and characteristic of the process or means through which the material goods are processed or means through which the material goods are finally prepared. For example, in the Capitalist society it is the machine or industry which produces surplus goods. Thus, it is called Capitalist mode of production. Bottomore has pointed out that the crucial element in defining the mode of production is the way in which surplus is produced and its use controlled. Marx has argued that during the production process, the means and relation of production gradually develop which are essential for the surplus production. Thus each mode of production is characterised by specific relation of production. Therefore, Marx has argued that the mode of pro-

duction is an "abstract concept". He has described four types of the mode of production. First is the mode of production which is characterised by communal ownership of land, strong kinship ties etc. It is the classless society. The second is the ancient mode of production which consist of two classes-master and slave. The entire mode and means of production are owned by the master and the slave is exploited for the surplus production. The third is the feudal mode of production in which the Lord and Serf are the two main classes. The ownership right is in the hand of Lord while Serf is the labour force. Fourth and last is the capitalist mode of production which has two major classes; bourgeoisie and proletariat. In this system the ownership of capital is the chief determinant of the production process. In every mode of production, the means of productions and relation of production are quite different from that of the earlier mode.

SOME OTHER TOPICS LIKELY TO BE ASKED

**Historical Materialism**

(both for long & short note)

Karl Marx's general ideas about the society are known as the theory of historical materialism. According to Marx material condition or economic factors affects the structure and development of society. Marx's theory of historical materialism is historical because Marx has traced the evolution of human societies from one stage to another. It is called materialistic because Marx has interpreted the evolution of societies in terms of their material or economic condition. Thus materialism simply mean it is the material things or reality which is basis for any change.

According to Friedrich Engels the theory of historical materialism was discovered by Karl Marx, but Marx thought it was Friedrich Engels who had conceived the materialist formulation of history independently. Both of them used this theory. In Engels' view, the theory of historical materialism takes a special view of the history. This view sought the final cause and spirit behind historical events. In the "*German Ideology*", Marx and Engels assert their views of history which is based on observation and an exact description of actual condition.

In the early year Marx was influenced by Hegel who was a liberal in the sense that he accepted the rule of law than the rule of individual person. His philosophy belong to *idealist tradition*. The idealist tradition began with Immanuel Kant and reached its zenith with Hegel. According to the idealist tradition reason is the essence of reality and spirit of reason expresses itself during the course of history. Hegel views history as "*progress in the consciousness of freedom*". The conscious freedom, according to Hegel is best expressed in religion and development of religious concept and ideas. In the religious and philosophical ideas correspond to socio-political problem. Hegel's history was progressing in the direction of Christianity, the reformation and the French revolution and the constitutional monarchy. Karl Marx also developed his ideas of human history initially on the basis of Hegel's views. But, in course of time, he, too joined hands with the young Hegelians and eventually evolved his new ideas on the history of human society which is

known as "*historical materialism*."

**Similarity :** Like Hegel, Marx recognised that the history of mankind is a single and non-repetitive process. Likewise he also believed that the law of historical process could be discovered.

Hegel has expressed his view of society in the form of *thesis, antithesis* and *synthesis*. Each statement of truth is called thesis and opposite of it is called antithesis. The opposite of antithesis is also true. In the course of time, thesis and antithesis are reconciled in the form of synthesis. The new thesis then has an antithesis with eventual prospect of turning into synthesis. In this process, the dialectic is going on. *Marx said that matter is the realm of truth and tried to reach the truth via materialism*. That is why the Marxian theory is known as historical materialism while Hegel's system is called "*dialectic idealism*"

**Basic Assumption :**

(1) Historical materialism is based upon the philosophy of human history. It is best understood as the sociological theory of human progress. As a theory, it provides scientific and systematic research programme for human history.

(2) Marx viewed society as a system of inter-related whole. The social groups, institutions, belief and doctrine with it are integrally related. He has studied their inter-relation rather than treating them separately.

(3) Marx viewed society as inherently movable in which changes are produced largely by internal contradiction and conflict.

(4) According to Marx, there is no permanent persistence of human nature. Human nature is neither originally evil nor originally good. Marx held that human nature is potentially revolutionary. Human will is not a passive reflection of events but contains the power to rebel against circumstances in the prevailing limitation of human nature.

The clearest exposition of the theory of historical materialism is contained in Marx's "*Preface to a contribution to the critique of political economy*" (1859). Here, he says that the actual basis of the society is its economic structure. For Marx, economic structure of the society is made up of its relation of production. The legal and political superstructure



of the society is based on relation of production. His main contention is that the process of socio-political and intellectual life in general is conditioned by the mode of production of material life. On the basis of this logic, Marx, tries to construct the entire view of history.

Marx says that new development of productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relation of production. When people become conscious of the state of conflict, they wish to bring an end to it. This period of history is called by Marx the period of "*Social revolution*". The revolution brings about resolution of conflict. It means new forces of production take root and give rise to new relation of production. Thus, for Marx, it is the growth of new productive forces which outline the course of human history.

The productive forces are the power of society used to produce material conditions of life. For Marx, human is an account of development and consequence of new forces of material production. This is the reason why his views of history is given the name of historical materialism. This is the nutshell of the theory of historical materialism.

In brief, we can say that Marx's theory of historical materialism states that all subject whether living or inanimate are the subject of continuous change. The rate, of this change is determined by the law at dialectics such as thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

Marx, says the production of material requirement of life which is very basic necessity of all societies compel individual to enter difficult social relations that are independent of their role. This is the basic idea of Marx's theory about society.

According to Marx, social relation are defined in terms of material condition which he calls '*infrastructure*'. The economic base of the society form

the infrastructure. Forces and relations of production come under the category of infrastructure. Within the "superstructure" figure the legal, educational and political institutions as well as values, cultural way of thinking, religious ideology and philosophy.

According to Marx, the forces of production include the capacity of society to produce. This capacity to produce is essentially a function of scientific and technical knowledge, technological equipment and the organisation of the labour force. The relation of production arise out of the production process but essentially overlap with the relation of ownership of the means of production.

Marx developed the idea of social change resulting from internal conflict as the theory of class struggle. For Marx social change displays a regular pattern. Marx's construct, is in broad terms the historical sequences of the main types of society, proceeding from the simple, undifferentiated society of primitive communalism to complex society of modern communalism.

In the revolutionary period, one class is attached to old relation of production. The relation hinders the development of the forces of production. The new relations of production do not create obstacle in the ways of development of the forces of production. They increase maximum growth of these forces. This is the abstract formulation of the Marx's ideas of class struggle.

According to Marx revolutions are necessary manifestation of the society. Revolution occurs when the condition for them mature. Marx wrote-" no social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is a room in it have been developed and the new higher relation of production never appear before the material condition of their existence have matured in the work of old society".

