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Lecture-41



Theory of surplus value:

The theory of surplus value is conferred by Marx thoroughly in his famous work 'Das Capital' which was considered as the Gospel or Bible of socialism. The dogma of surplus value is the most relevant theoretical contribution of Karl Marx. The theory of surplus value is imbedded in the labour theory of value holds that labour spent by the labourer in the production of the commodity is the sole criterion for determining its value. Marx acknowledges that human labour cannot create value by itself alone. It uses instruments of production which are owned by the capitalists.

The capitalist buys the labour power of the labourer and applies it to the raw material to produce commodities which have an exchange value of the commodity and the wages paid to the worker by the capitalist in producing that commodity is surplus value. Marx explicates the whole process of exploitation with his theory of surplus value. It is a distinct feature of capitalist mode of production. Surplus value ensues because the commodity produced by the worker is sold by the capitalist for more than what the worker receives as wages. In his Das Capital, Marx elaborated it in a simple technical manner. He contended that the worker produces a commodity which belongs to the capitalist and whose value is realized by the capitalist in the form of price. This capital has two parts-constant capital and variable capital. Constant capital relates to means of production like raw material, machinery toolset used for commodity production. The variable capital denotes to the wages paid to the worker. Surplus value is the differences between the value produce by the worker and what he actually gets in exchange for this value of his labour. In other words, surplus value is unpaid labours of the labour.

Marx's theory of surplus value is simply an examination capitalism. According to Marx, capitalism constantly produces the germs of its own destruction. The instruments which the owners use to increase their profits and rents are the instruments, fall inevitably into the hands of workers to be used by them to thrash the whole capitalist system. Professor Francis. W.Coker has precised this process as follows:

First place, the tendency under capitalist production is towards large production and monopoly. Secondly the tendency towards local concentration, large-scale production necessitates the bringing together of thousands of workers into small areas and by these contacts they become more fully conscious of their common hardship and needs. In the third place, the tendency of capitalist production is towards the accomplishment of ever wider fields for markets. This requires huge development of the means of communication among different parts of the industrial world and this, in turn, enables inter communication among the workers distribute throughout the industrial world. Fourthly, the capitalist system produces recurrent economic crises: Lastly, the tendency under capitalism is towards a steady increase in the unhappiness, ignorance and dependency of the workers and this worsens their hostility and dissatisfaction.

Class struggle:

Class struggle is elucidated as the tension or antagonism which exists in society due to competing socioeconomic interests and desires between people of different classes. It is the main work of Marxian political philosophy. Marx wrote in The Communist Manifesto, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." Class struggle pressed society from one stage to the next, in a dialectical process. In each stage, an ownership class controls the means of production while a lower class provides labour for production. The two classes come into conflict and that conflict leads to social change.

It is documented in theoretical studies that Marx observed the structure of society in relation to its major classes, and the struggle between them as the device of change in this structure. He has no equilibrium or consensus theory. Conflict was not deviational within society's structure, nor were classes' functional elements maintaining the system. The structure itself was a derivative of and ingredient in the struggle of classes. He has a conflict view of modern (nineteenth century) society.

Class conflict may emerge in various forms that include direct violence, such as wars fought for resources and cheap labour, indirect violence, such as deaths from poverty, starvation, illness or unsafe working conditions, coercion, such as the threat of losing a job or the pulling of an important investment, and ideologically, such as with books and articles promoting capitalism. Furthermore, political forms of class conflict exist; legally or illegally lobbying or bribing government leaders for passage of partisan desirable legislation including labour laws, tax codes, consumer laws, acts of congress or other sanction, injunction or tariff. The conflict can be direct, as with a lockout intended in destroying a labour union, or indirect, as with an informal slowdown in production protesting low wages by workers or unfair labour practices by capital.

In general, there are six elements in Marx's view of class conflict.

1. Classes are authority relationships based on property ownership.
2. A class defines groupings of individuals with shared life situations, thus interests.
3. Classes are naturally antagonistic by virtue of their interests.
4. Imminent within modern society is the growth of two antagonistic classes and their struggle, which eventually absorbs all social relations.
5. Political organization and Power is an instrumentality of class struggle, and reigning ideas are its reflection.
6. Structural change is a consequence of the class struggle.

The exclusive criterion on the basis of which the class of a person is determined is his ownership (or control) of means of production constitute the bourgeoisie (exploiters) and those who own labour power constitute the proletariat (exploited). It is apparent that Marx explained classes on the basis of twin criteria of a person's place with mode of production and his consequent position in terms of relations of production.

Marx stated that class conflict is the real dynamic force of human history. In Communist Manifesto (1848), Marx and Engels wrote that "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles". In the capitalist societies, class differentiation is most clear, class consciousness is more developed and class conflict is more acute. Therefore, capitalism is the concluding point in the historical feature of bourgeois period. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly falling each other - bourgeoisie and proletariat. It can be established that According Marx, Class is rooted in social relations of production, and cannot be mentioned in the first place to relations of distribution and consumption or their ideological reflections. In considering the class consciousness of the proletariat, Marxists are not concerned with the ideas of individual workers about their position in society so much as with the following series of categories: relations of production (sale of labour-power, exploitation); conflict of workers and employers on this basis (economic struggles, trade unions, elementary political battles for economic ends); conflict at the level of class (economic struggles which merge into the conflict between classes, which is organised through the political parties and the struggle for state power); the theoretical and practical struggle to build revolutionary parties of the working class, in conflict with non-revolutionary and counter-revolutionary tendencies in the class and their reflection inside the revolutionary party.

Marx made a distinction between the objective fact of existence of a class and its subjective awareness about its being a class, class consciousness. Division of labour is the main source of historical development of classes and class antagonisms. Through a detailed historical analysis, Marx indicated that no major resentment disappears unless there emerges a new antagonism.

General bitterness between rich and poor is there but in capitalism, it has been severely polarised into antagonism between the capitalist and the proletariat. Thus, in capitalism, the emergence of proletariat has a special consequence. It is not an ancient phenomenon because its suffering, its exploitation and determination is a pattern for the human conduct. The proletariat can abolish all classes and all class antagonisms by eliminating itself as a separate classes. In the class struggle, the majority proletariat is successful. Marx and Engels wrote that "The workers of the world unite. The workers have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win".

When evaluating class struggle concept, Marx envisaged the emergence of a classless society, free from exploitation and suppression. Such class-less society will also be a state less society because with the vanishing of classes, rationale for the existence of state will disappear.

Dictatorships of the proletariat:

The notion of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' is widely slandered. In Marxist socio-political theory, the dictatorship of the proletariat denotes to a state in which the proletariat, or the working class, has control of political power. The phrase was devised by Joseph Weydemeyer and then adopted by the originators of Marxism, Karl Marx and

Friedrich Engels, in the 19th century. In Marxist theory, the dictatorship of the proletariat is the intermediate system between capitalism and communism, when the government is in the process of changing the ownership of the means of production from private to collective ownership. The notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat was major explanation of Marx's theory of the communist society and the role of the proletarian state. Marx did not write clearly and systematically about the dictatorship of the proletariat and about the exact nature and form of post-revolutionary communist society. Marxist theory represented that the existence of any government implies the dictatorship of one social class over another. The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is thus used as an antonym of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a transitional phase on the track from capitalism to socialism and communism. In the critique of the Gotha programme, he further illuminated that between capitalism and communist society lies a period of revolutionary transformation from capitalism to socialism. In political domain, this change will take the form of dictatorship of the proletariat. It is the first step in the uprising of the working class which will raise the proletariat to the position of a ruling class.

According to Marx, during the dictatorship of the proletariat, there will be a regime in which the proletariat will control the state power. Such a transitional phase of dictatorship of the proletariat is required because the demolition of whole capitalist social and political order cannot be fully accomplished without capturing the state power and without using it as a tool to create condition for the helping a communist social order.

Marx and Engels were convinced that existing states whether as instrument of class domination and oppression, or rule by bureaucratic parasites on the whole of society, would propagate integrally strong and remain minority states representing in the interests of the small powerful possessing class. It was only when the proletarian majority detained the state structure that the state became truly democratic and majoritarian. Whatever might be the form the state assumed, it was controlling machinery which the proletariat had to contend with while making its revolution.

In the later phase of his life, Marx thought that there is the imperative need to destroy the state and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the preliminary states, bearing in mind the example of the French Revolution of 1789, he predicted a seizure of the existing state machine by the revolutionary proletariat. He believed that political centralization would assist the revolutionary process. In a book review written around 1848-1849, Marx witnessed that the destruction of the state had one implication for the communists, such as the cessation of an organised power of one class for the suppression of another class.

In the year 1850, the term dictatorship of the proletariat swapped rule of the proletariat. Marx and Engels emphasized the notion of extraordinary power during an emergency for a limited period of time. It was "a social description, a statement of the class character of the political power. It did not designate a statement about the forms of

government authority". It is in fact the nature of political power which guarantees its class character. According to Marx and Engels, the dictatorship of the proletariat was by the entire class, for the revolution would be made by the masses themselves. In a series of articles entitled the class struggles in France, Marx debated that the announcement of the permanence of the revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat is the necessary transit point to the abolition of class distinctions generally to the abolition of all social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social relations."

There is contradiction among philosophers regarding the nature and character of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marx wrote that the first step in the working class revolution is the raising of the proletariat to the position of the ruling class. The victory of democracy the proletarian movement is the mindful movement of the immense majority in the interest of majority. The communists said that this dictatorship means the despotic rule of the communist minority within the proletariat but the socialists hold that this means a socialist government by a proletarian majority. The dictatorship of the proletariat would be established by vicious methods but would not be maintained violence and suppression.

Vision of a communist society:

Marx described communism as a form of society which the proletariat will bring into existence through its revolutionary struggle. In Communist Philosophy, Marx and Engels debated that the communists have no interests separate and apart from the interests of the proletariat as a whole. In his Economic and Philosophical Texts, Marx explained communism as the positive abolition of private property. It also entailed the abolition of classes and abolition of division of labour. In economic terms, the communist society will be a society of associated producers'. In political terms, communism will be the first state in the history of mankind to political power for universal interests instead of partisan interests. Therefore, it will be different from the state in capitalism which is no more than the managing committee of the bourgeoisie. According to Marx, the state in capitalism is serving the long-term interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole.

Marx created his vision of communism out of the human and technological potentials already visible in his time, given the priorities that would be accepted by a new socialist society. Marx believed that the programs presented by a triumphant working class to deal with the problems left by the old society and the revolution would uncheck a social dynamic whose general results could be recorded previously. Projecting the communist future from existing patterns and trends is an integral part of Marx's analysis of capitalism, and analysis which links social and economic problems with the objective interests that incline each class to deal with them in distinctive ways; what unfolds are the real possibilities in-built in a socialist transformation of the capitalist mode of production. In this reference, Marx declares, "we do not anticipate the world dogmatically, but rather wish to find the new world through the criticism of the old."

Marx spoke of two stages of communist society. In the first stage, communism will bring about the socialization of means of production. It means that the means of production will not be in the hands of any one class but in the hands of society as a whole. At this stage, labour will continue to exist and the organizing principle of the economy will be "from each according to his capacity to each according to his work". It means that everyone will work according to one's capability and get according to the amount of work done. At the second and final stage, the communist society will guarantee the end of man's power by objective forces. According to Marx, communism is not only the abolition of private property but also the eradication of state and abolition of classes. It will be a classless and stateless society in which government of men will be replaced by administration of things. Marx visualized communism as the final solution of the conflict between existence and essence, freedom and necessity, individual and the species.

Marx asserted that communism is the solution to the problem of exploitation and oppression. Since communism will ensure the disappearance of social division of labour, it will become possible for man to do one thing today another tomorrow. Furthermore, it will be a state of many people where everyone will work according to ability and get according to need. The creation of new needs will also ensure the creation of means for their satisfaction. According to William Ebenstein, Marx had not devised clear theory as to how the political reformation from capitalist to proletarian rule could come about. Though in the Communist Manifesto, he envisaged in the need for revolution. He was less assertive later, speaking in 1872 at a public meeting in Amsterdam following the Congress of International, Marx professed that the means of attaining power for the working class are not everywhere the same. He wrote that "We know that we must take into consideration the institutions, the habits and customs of different regions, and we do not deny that there are countries like America, England and where the workers can attain their objectives by peaceful means. But such is not the case in all other countries".

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1. According to Marxian theory revolutions come in the society because:

A. The capitalists so desire

B. The religious people manipulate that

C. Continuous class struggle is going on

D. Educated masses get dissatisfied

E. Foreign powers get interested in national affairs

2. According to Marx value of the commodity would be fixed in accordance with:

A. Capital invested in it

B. Machinery used for production

C. The extent of its dependence on the foreign market

D. The extent of its demand in the foreign market

E. The socially useful labour put in it

3. A capitalist adds to his wealth because:

A. The workers wish so

B. Machines installed by him produce more

C. There is difference between exchange value of what is produced and what is paid

D. Capitalist can win the cooperation of the workers

4. Karl Marx believed that social change can be brought about by:

A. Evolutionary means only

B. Revolutionary means only

C. By spread of education only

D. With the help of both evolutionary and revolutionary methods

E. With the help of propaganda alone

5. Marx suggested that before state is finally abolished during the transitory period:

A. Private sector should be allowed to continue as it is

B. Private sector should be strengthened

C. There should be nationalisation of all industries

D. There should be nationalisation of small scale industries alone

E. There should be nationalisation of big industries alone