CHAPTER – II

Marxian Philosophical Realms: A Review

A comprehensive perception of the combination of Marx and Phule, primarily, demands a holistic view of Marxian thought, his key concepts which deal with the problems of conceptualization of actual transformations in the social, political, economic order. In order to understand Marxian philosophical thrusts a view of his predecessors also is inevitably required. Because neither Marxian philosophy, nor its socio-economic drives can be fully realized without a view of his contemporary intellectual scenario. The last quarter of 18th century and the first half of 19th century have been marked with the French revolution which was political; and industrial revolution, which was economic. Building of railways chiefly accelerated the process of industrialization in early nineteenth century Europe. It resulted into a new world of great industrial centers, towns and cities such as Manchester and Lyons, in which were gathered a new class, the industrial working class or proletariat. These workers lived and labored in utter miserable situations. This working class made revolts against the owners of factory, which indicated the antagonism in the heart of these workers. But these proletariats were lacking in certain ideological and philosophical grounding, which was needed for the struggle.
During these decades, enlightenment movement emerged at the centre of the struggle of ideas between the supporters of capitalism and the defenders of feudalism. Alex Callinico has a pertinent point to make in this regard:

The system of ideas, of ideology, that dominated feudal Europe had been wrought by the philosophers of the Catholic Church, who had modified the ideas of Aristotle, one of the greatest Greek thinkers, until they fitted in with Christianity. The result was way of looking at the world which could explain much in considerable detail, without in any way placing in question the power of the feudal lords and the monarchy. (2004, 43)

A brief mention of Aristotelian philosophy would throw light on the growth and development of Western philosophical tradition in which Marx based his intellectual conceptualization of providing socio-economic and cultural structures. Aristotle’s understanding of world prevailed in the realm of philosophy, he argued that everything in the world had a purpose and this purpose provided its place in the world. Aristotle argued that the purposes of individual beings, and the places they naturally occupy, all come together to form the pattern of the universe. This attitude towards the world served two purposes, according to Callinicos.

First, it provided a sophisticated version of the Christian myth of the belief that the universe and everything in it had been created by God. For the idea that everything has a purpose implies that it fits into a design, a design made by an all-powerful, all-knowing deity with some particular end in view. Secondly, it corresponds to the structure of feudal society, in which everyone had their place, whether nobleman, guildsman or serf, a place into which you were born and in which your children would follow. At the apex of the feudal system stood the king, just as God was at the centre of the universe. According to this system of ideas, the stable and harmonious feudal order, in which everyone had their place, mirrored the stability and harmony of God’s universe. (2004, 44)
Aristotelian world view is status-quoist and resembles the system of *Varnashramdharma* in Hindu religion. This system of ideas modeled on Christian design was challenged by two developments: the growth of a new class and growth of science. However the effects of the 17th century revolution of science brought by Galileo, Kepler, Descartes, Boyle and Newton, had devastating effects on feudalism. Copernicus had proved, against Aristotle’s notion that the earth revolves around the sun. Galileo had introduced the law of inertia, according to which every object is naturally in motion and not stable or at rest. Feudal ideology tried to repress the new science. “Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake in 1600 for agreeing with Copernicus, while Galileo was silenced after being threatened with the same fate. Nevertheless, a century later their followers had triumphed. Sir Isaac Newton’s *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* provided the physical sciences with their basis until the early 20th century.” (45)

The new science was purely materialist, where there was no God, no soul, no devils, no designs or purpose. Obviously, just by rejecting God and purpose from physics, the new science rejected the ruling ideology. But there was a logical next step, which was a shift from study of nature to the study of society. In this way, the scientific study of society was begun.

One of the chief results of 1789 revolution in France was the emergence of modern socialism. Its two main branches were the Utopian Socialism and the Revolutionary Communism. The utopian socialists believed that reason would
triumph as a result of a process of enlightenment. The gradual spread of socialist ideas through education would transform the world. In the highly regimented utopia depicted by Etienne Cabet in his *Voyage in Icarie* (1840), there was no place for capital. This was the emergence of French Communism. Cabet’s opponent, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, too rejected the communists’ conceptions of a centralized future society. His utopia was a paradise of the small peasant and artisan, in which the banks and big capital had been abolished, but private property preserved.

There was other, very crucial tradition of communism before Marx, of which Blanqui was the representative:

Blanqui followed the Utopians in virulently criticizing capitalism, and in looking forward to a future society, which he called communism. He followed Babeuf, however, in believing that communism could be achieved only through the armed overthrow of the existing state, and the establishment of a revolutionary dictatorship. It was Blanqui who coined the expression ‘dictatorship of proletariat.’ By this he meant, however, a dictatorship *over* the proletariat. (2004, 50-51)

Blanqui had mass working class support, but his strategies reflected the undeveloped state of the class struggle. He and other utopians failed to bring any scientific analysis of capitalism itself.

Among major three influences on Marx,- Hegel, Ricardo and Feuerbach. Hegel was the most prominent. Hegel’s entire philosophic system was based on the concept of dialectics. In fact dialectics was at the heart of Hegel’s philosophic thought. Dialectics- the way of thinking that was to provide the basis for an
understanding of the historical process. Hegel maintained that all things are contradictory in themselves. Alex Callinicos has brilliantly interpreted Hegel’s concept of dialectics:

The acorn, in becoming an oak, has itself ceased to be. The oak is different from the acorn. The oak is not that acorn. Hegel would say that the oak is the negation of the acorn. You implicit within the acorn is the potential to become an oak. The acorn contains within itself its own negation, and is thus contradictory. It is this contradiction, says Hegel, and only this contradiction. That allows it to grow. (60)

Basically Hegel was an objective idealist who believed that the world was created by the supra-human, objectively existing consciousness – Absolute idea and world spirit. He made a serious contribution to the development of philosophical thought by illustrating a comprehensive and harmonious system of idealistic dialectics as a totality of logical laws and categories. V.G. Afanasyev pertinently comments on Hegel’s method of dialectics thus:

Hegel evolved the basic laws of dialectics governing the development of ideas and thoughts. He showed that the development of ideas did not follow a closed circuit, but rose from lower to higher forms, that quantitative changes turned into qualitative ones in this process and that contradictions were the source of development. He characterized the basic concepts (categories) of dialectics and disclosed their interconnection and ability to turn into each other. (1987, 18)

In order to put Hegel’s world view into enquiry, we need to have a close look at his theoretical writings. Classical idealism had adopted the view that, due to changing material existence, the physical world could not be understood with any direct certainty. This assumption of classical idealism led to abandon the
material world in order to focus on the realm of absolute truth whose existence could be relied upon as objects of theoretical investigation. Ken Morrison has rightly put the role of Hegel in the development of social theory:

Hegel’s most important contribution to the development of social theory, therefore, was his reintroduction of the material world back into thought. This immediately rescued the material world from the philosophic extremities where it had been placed since antiquity, mainly by bringing it back into a theory of knowledge. (2012, 30)

Hegel’s perception of philosophy was influenced by Aristotle, who had rejected Plato’s doctrine of the transcendent realm of absolutes which tended to stand above the material world of experience. And this was a crucial step in philosophic system, which considered that the principles of human and social development worked implicitly toward ultimate ends and that the process of development was itself implicit in social and historical subject matter. (30) Hence the focal point of philosophy and theory shifted from an investigation of the realm of Platonic absolutes to one of studying and explaining the material processes of social and historical development itself. (30)

This shift brought many crucial things with it. First, it introduced the concept of society as an independent reality. Second, it separated the space of society from the space of history. Third, it led to the assertion that historical development itself took a social form represented by distinct societies, whose systems of politics, forms of class distinction, religion, and inward social divisions obeyed principles of their own. These steps made it clear that philosophy could
only understand history by adopting social concepts, and that history was, in fact, social in nature. (31)

Hegel was the most dominant philosopher in Europe. Marx’s early writing proves the fact that he carried a great influence of Hegel during that period. Hegel was one of the inventors of the most impressive and influencing doctrine of philosophy in 19th century called philosophical idealism. Ken Morrison attempts a definition of idealism in Hegelian philosophic perspective:

Idealism can be defined as a philosophic perspective which put forward the idea that the ultimate. Conditions of human existence and development can be arrived at only through the examination of abstract philosophic categories. As a philosophical perspective, idealism had claimed that the fundamental task of philosophy and social thought was to understand human existence by an examination of abstract categories such as reason, history, and existence. (38)

What was important in Hegel’s observation was the interrelatedness of the processes of world, history, and existence. He did not treat these aspects as independent or separate.

Marx was greatly influenced by Hegel’s thoughts when he was a student at University of Berlin. As a matter of fact Hegel was the most charismatic figure for a generation of intellectuals with his rebellion philosophy and the method to explain broader aspects of individual and historical development. But Marx found so many unacceptable arguments in Hegelian philosophic system and he started to raise doubts about it. Hegel’s whole basis of philosophic contemplation was challenged by Marx. In the early work of Marx we find severe criticism of Hegel
that denotes his departure from Hegel. As quoted by Ken Morrison in his book *Marx Durkheim Weber*, Marx writes *In the Holy Family*:

The whole destructive work results in the most conservative philosophy because it thinks it has overcome the real world merely by transforming it into a thing of thought. Hegel thus stands the world on its head and can therefore dissolve in the head all the limitations which naturally remain in existence. If, from real apples, pears and strawberries, I form the general idea ‘Fruit’, if I go further and imagine that my abstract idea ‘Fruit’, derived from real fruit, is an entity existing outside me, is indeed the true essence of the pear, the apple, etc. then, in the language of [Hegelian] philosophy I am declaring that ‘Fruit’ is the ‘Substance’ of the pear, the apple, etc. I am saying, therefore, that to be a pear is not essential to the pear, that to be an apple is not essential to the apple; that what is essential to these things is not their real being, perceptible to the senses, but the essence that I have extracted from them and then foisted on them, the essence of my idea-‘Fruit’. (38)

Marx, in the passage quoted above, seems to focus on an understanding of reality and history and ultimately material world of experience. Marx begins to concentrate on the social existence and economic necessity of human being. Here he breaks with philosophical idealism and out rightly rejects the whole Hegelian philosophic system.

Hegel believed that the fundamental task of philosophy was to examine the role of the abstract categories of history, while Marx believed that Hegel’s insistence on the abstract conception of history made the real question of human existence seem abstract and unimportant. Again, Hegel maintained that ideas are most important in understanding social and historical development. Marx took opposite view and stated that Hegel misrepresented the essential human social life
due to his ultimate insistence on the reality of ideas rather than reality of social conditions, and individual’s needs. Ken Morrison rightly argues:

Marx thought that individuals have physical needs and requirements which sustain their life and wellbeing, and these needs come before intellectual needs and can only be satisfied by direct productive activity in the world. Marx, then, took the view that, in and of themselves, ‘ideas’ do not live nor act, nor do they have needs; only human beings do. In this respect, Marx reasoned that the most significant fact about human beings is that they must satisfy their material needs in order to live and that these needs must be met on a daily and hourly basis, otherwise there is no life and no material existence. (39)

It must be understood that while Hegel stressed the role of reason in human history and theoretically emphasized ‘ideas’ in history, Marx concentrated on material well being through satisfaction of human material needs. In this way Marx put materialism in sharp opposition to idealism. To sum up Hegelianism briefly, Alex Callinicos says:

But Hegel had got the whole thing upside down. He had discovered the dialectical process at work in natural and historical events. He sought to isolate what all these had in common. He then made these shared features the basis of his logic. Finally, he claimed that these logical categories were themselves responsible for the life and movement of the real world. The dialectic, from being a way of understanding the world, a way of thinking, had been elevated into the controlling factor itself. Thought created reality, said Hegel, just as in the Bible God creates the world. (2004, 62)

What Marx himself says about idealistic philosophical system prevailing in Germany, is crucial because it serves as the background for his concept of historical materialism. Marx says:
German criticism never left the realm of philosophy. Far from examining its general philosophic premises, all of its inquiries were based on one philosophical system, that of Hegel. There was mystification not only in the answers but also even in the questions themselves. This dependence on Hegel is the reason why none of these modern critics even attempted a comprehensive criticism of the Hegelian system, though each of them claimed to have gone beyond Hegel. (1994, 105)

Along with dependence on Hegel, religious conceptions too played a pivotal role in German philosophic system. Marx further says:

The entire body of German philosophical criticism from Strauss to Stirner is confined to criticism of religious conceptions. The critics started from real religion and actual theology. What religious consciousness and a religious conception really meant was determine variously as they went along. Their advance consisted in Subsuming the allegedly dominant metaphysical, political, juridical, moral and other conceptions under the class of religious or theological conceptions; and similarly in pronouncing political, juridical, moral consciousness as religion or theological, and the political, juridical, moral man—“man” in the last resort — as religious. The dominance of religion was taken for granted. Gradually every dominant relationship was pronounced a religious relationship and transformed into a cult, a cult of law, a cult of the station etc. On all sides it was only a question of dogmas and belief in dogmas.” (105-106)

For Marx, it seems that Hegelian philosophic system is based on orthodoxical religious foundation where thought is more important than the reality. The dominance of religion is taken for granted, as Marx puts, by Hegelians, therefore no comprehensive criticism of Hegel emerged in post-Hegelian philosophic world. Marx’s criticism of Hegelianism, though, once he was also infatuated by it and which played a very seminal role in Marx’s intellectual upbringing, serves as a crucial and concrete foundation for his entire
philosophical and ideological construction. Apart from Hegel, Marx’s criticism of Feuerbach is equally important, because Feuerbach too had immensely influenced Dr. Karl Marx and shaped his world view. Let us have a brief look at Marx’s analysis of Feuerbachian philosophical system.

According to Hegel, contradiction is at the root of all movement and life, and the only reality was change and movement. These were subversive ideas if applied to society. Callinicos quotes Engels in this connection as:

> [that] all successive historical systems are only transitory stages in the endless course of development of human society from the lower to the higher. Each stage is necessary, and therefore justified for the time and conditions to which it owes its origin. But in the face of new, higher conditions which develop in its own womb, it loses its validity and justification. It must give way to a higher stage which will also in its turn decay and perish. (SWiii 339) (2004, 62)

It meant that capitalism was one of the stages in the human history, and not the end of history. Callinicos further argues:

> The dialectical categories, like all products of thought, merely reflect the real, material world. They could be a tool to understanding the material world, but first they had to be released from their ‘mystical shell’. And it was Ludwig Feuerbach who set Hegel’s ideas back on their feet. (62)

Hegel had declared that the basic ‘simple unity’ is God, the ‘Absolute Idea’. Then comes the ‘negation’, the material world that was against and alienated from God. Then the third stage, the dialectics i.e. the growth to human consciousness, this would reconcile God and the material world in Absolute spirit. Feuerbach argued that as Calinicos puts:
Hegel had turned something that is merely the property of human beings, the faculty of thought, into the ruling principle of existence. Instead of seeing human beings as part of the material world, and thought merely as the way they reflect that material world, Hegel had turned both man and nature into mere reflections of the all-powerful Absolute Idea. (63)

Feuerbach considers this at the root of all religion. Religion, Feuerbach thinks, takes human powers like thinking, acting to change the world, and so on and transfers them to an imaginary being i.e. God. Means human powers are handed over to something alien being. Therefore, God, the product of human thought becomes all-powerful and omniscient, rather God is made so. On the contrary, human beings become devalued and regarded as sinful, weak and foolish creatures, or the puppets in the hands of their own invention. In this way they are alienated from their own powers and capabilities.

“Feuerbach’s analysis of religion and the materialism, on which his analysis rested, had an enormous impact on the left Hegelians of the 1840.” (63) What was the major contribution of Feuerbach was that he reinstated the materialism of the Enlightenment. His most fundamental concept was that of human nature, which he called ‘species being’. But the essential difference between Feuerbach and other Utopian Socialists like Fourier was that he widened the very concept of human nature so that it included more than mere self-interest. He wrote ‘The essence of man is contained only in community, in the unity of man with man.’ (63) He wished to make people aware of their true nature, and this could be achieved only through a process of education whose aim would be to
destruct the influence of religion on people’s minds. Marx criticized Feuerbach’s philosophic position on many grounds, but still his critique of Hegel provided the starting point for Marx’s own distinctive philosophic position.

Marx, while talking about the existing materialism, comments on Feuerbach and declares his independent position. He says:

The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism – that of Feuerbach included – is that the thing [Gegenstand], reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object [objekt], or of contemplation [Anschauung], but not as human sensuous activity, practice, not subjectively. Hence it happened that the active side, in contradistinction to materialism, was developed by idealism – but only abstractly, since, of course, idealism does not know real, sensuous activity as such. Feuerbach wants sensuous objects, really differentiated from the thought objects, but he does not conceive human activity itself as objective [gegenstandliche] activity. Hence, in the Essence of Christianity, he regards the theoretical attitude as the only genuinely human attitude, while practice is conceived and fixed only in its dirty-judicial form of appearance. Hence he does not grasp the significance of “revolutionary”, of “practical-critical”, activity. (Marx and Engels, 2008, 69)

Marx meant that Feuerbach did not understand the significance of action, practice, but believed merely in thought. While attacking the contemporary doctrine of materialism and specifically Feuerbachian materialism Marx says:

The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstance and upbringing, and that therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating. Hence, this doctrine necessarily arrives at dividing society into two parts, of which one is superior to society (in Robert Owen, for example). The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice.” (70)
Through this we can notice Marx’s position as dialectical materialist and not as enlightenment materialist. Through the criticism and analysis of Feuerbachian philosophic doctrines, Marx’s stand evolves in a very categorical manner. While focusing on the shortcomings of Feuerbach, Marx writes that – “Feuerbach, not satisfied with abstract thinking appeals to sensuous contemplation; but he does not conceive sensuousness as practical, human sensuous activity.” (71)

He further states that “Feuerbach, consequently, does not see that the “religious sentiment” is itself a social product, and that the abstract individual whom he analyses belongs in reality to a particular form of society.” (71). Marx insists on practicality of social life and outrightly rejects the contemplative materialism. He summarizes the ultimate point attained by contemplative materialism thus – “The highest point attained by contemplative materialism, that is, materialism which does not understand sensuousness as practical activity, is the contemplation of single individuals in “civil society.” (71)

While distinguishing between the old materialism i.e. contemplative materialism, where practice or action is the essence, Marx focuses on the standpoints of these materialism – “The standpoint of the old materialism is “civil” society; the standpoint of the new is human society, or socialized humanity.” (72)
The most crucial statement of Marx, pertaining to the ordeal of philosophy and its propounder, is the change of world and not merely the interpretation of the world. In this connection we have one of the most celebrated quotations by Marx i.e. “the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it” (72). This means, Marx’s entire analysis of German philosophic tradition, including Feuerbach, is based on the necessity of action. The interpretation of world is not adequate because it is not going to bring any solution to the suffering humanity. German philosophers have not given any panacea to relieve humanity from suffering. Therefore Marx brings a certain scientific method that will serve as the panacea for the suffering humanity. This Marxist scientific method is communism which evolves through certain stages. These stages can be studied in various Marxian concepts.

Marx’s philosophic upbringing, his critique of Hegel, Feuerbach and the whole German ideological system inspired him to formulate his own ideological and philosophical construct which later on became the most important instrument for the emancipatory struggle of the proletariat in the world. Marxian philosophy is not only the science of emancipation, but it is an inevitable and concrete foundation of Cultural Studies. Marx propounded his thoughts, almost in all branches of knowledge, he never, specifically, wrote on the issues of culture; but still some of his basic concepts enjoy the status of pioneering concepts in Cultural Studies. As announced in the very introduction of this thesis, the argument leading
towards cultural reconstruction in Indian context is to be developed, and in accordance with this argument the compatible concepts of Marx will be sought and interpreted; and in the light of these concepts Phule’s literature will be studied. Hence it becomes obligatory to focus on those Marxian concepts which are, now a days, considered as key concepts in Cultural Studies.

- **Historical Materialism**

Karl Marx’s “Preface” to *A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy* (1859) is an influential text in establishing a basic framework for understanding the relationship between politics and culture. This, one of the short pieces, is widely read because it gives categorical description of “historical materialism”- Marx’s theory of development of history. In this preface Marx gave the fullest formal statement of the basic propositions and principles of historical materialism:

In the social production of their life, [people] enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum-total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of [People] that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in 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 have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations tern into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social
revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which [people] become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production. No social order even perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore [humanity] always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation. (1969-70, 503-4)

This proposition of historical materialism is interpreted by many neo-Marxist thinkers as the basis of understanding history and society. Doug Lorimer interprets as:

This formulation of the basic propositions and principles of Marxist social theory highlights its two most important features. First, strict historicism, the consideration of society as something that is in a state of constant development. Second, the consistent application of the materialist view of history as a law governed process, conditioned in the final analysis by the development of humanity’s productive forces, by the level of development of its productive interaction with nature. (2009, 28)
Basically, it seems that, historical materialism is a science related with the general laws and motive forces of the development of human society. As the other sciences do, historical materialism too intends to reveal the essence of the object of its study by disclosing the material relations that are at the foundation of the surface phenomena of its object of study. (20). Now we will focus on the reasons behind emergence of historical materialism. Certain social and theoretical prerequisites were necessary for the emergence of historical materialism. Doug Lorimer says:

The acceleration of social development, the kaleidoscopic events following the English and especially the French, bourgeois revolutions; the extreme aggravation of class contradiction and collisions; the emergence on the historical scene of the working class - such in general were the social preconditions that favoured the appearance of historical materialism. (20)

The pre-Marxist materialists too contributed immensely to the process of historical materialism. But their interpretation of social and historical events was generally based on idealist position. 18th century French materialist Halvetius insisted on the significance of the atmosphere, surrounding and circumstances in formulating social opinion and human morals. He maintained that the bad morals were the results of bad circumstances. From his perception it seemed that he came to the conclusion that to change bad morals, circumstances must be changed. But Helvetius could not give the scientific explanation in terms of application of this idealistic principle. Helvetius thought that the changing of social conditions was to
be brought about by new, improved legislation, for which a ruler of genius was needed. His was the idealist position. (21)

Apart from idealistic stand of pre-Marxist materialists, natural science also had a certain influence on the emergence of historical materialism. There were some crucial efforts to produce a science of society in the end of 18\textsuperscript{th} century and first half of 19\textsuperscript{th} century. This science of society was supposed to be based on the model of the natural sciences – mechanics, physics, chemistry and biology. These sciences considered society naturalistically without taking into consideration its specific nature as a social organization with its own special, intrinsic laws of development. In the beginning of this chapter I have tried to focus on the role of natural sciences and their efforts to analyze and interpret the society on the basis of the principles of natural sciences. At the same time I have briefly commented on the materialism adopted by the scientists.

In fact Marx and Engels were the first to produce a very scientific theory of society which has become, in recent academic field, the basis of Marxist cultural theory. They formulated the concept of historical materialism by extending philosophical materialism. They also materialistically revised dialectics to the interpretation of society. Then they applied them to the revolutionary practical activity of the working class. On Marx’s concept of historical materialism, Lenin wrote:
Marx deepened and developed philosophical materialism to the full, and extended the cognition of nature to include the cognition of human society. His historical materialism was a great achievement in scientific thinking. The Chaos and arbitrariness that had previously reigned in views on history and politics were replaced by a strikingly integral and harmonious scientific theory which shows how, in consequence of the growth of productive forces, out of one system of social life another and higher develops. (1964-70, 25)

Here Lenin wants to focus on the intrinsic and inseparable connection between historical materialism and general philosophical materialism.

In fact Marx and Engels had formulated, earlier to their ‘preface’ to the critique of political Economy, the concept of historical materialism, in 1849 in The German Ideology. It was a new view of history and social development. In the beginning it was just a hypothesis and method, but it made possible for the first time, a strictly scientific approach to history. In Lenin’s words, Marx and Engels transformed the study of society into a science, because they made it possible to reveal the recurrence and regularity in the development of social relations. (Lorimer, 2009, 22) Historical materialism differs from specialized sciences because these sciences deal with the separate aspects of social life, on the other hand historical materialism deals with the general laws of the development of society, and most importantly, the laws of the rise, existence and motive forces of the development of socio-economic formation.
Historical materialism, as a science of social development studies not only particular community, or one particular people, country, but entire humanity.

Doug Lorimer pertinently says about the function of historical materialism:

> Historical materialism, like Marxist philosophy in general, combines both theory and method in one. It furnishes the dialectical – materialist solution to the basic, epistemological question of social the question of the relationship between social being and social consciousness. It tells us about the most general laws and driving forces of society and is therefore a scientific general social theory. For this reason historical materialism is both an effective method of studying the phenomena and processes of social life, and a method of revolutionary action. Only with its help can the historian, the economist, the student of law or art find his or her way amid the complexities of social phenomena. Most importantly, it provides the political vanguard of the working class with a scientific guide for revolutionary social practice, for bringing about the proletarian – socialist revolution. (26)

After criticizing German Philosophical tradition, particularly Hegelian philosophy, Marx and Engels turned their attention in developing a suitable framework for their materialist theoretical perception of history. This materialist theory of history is the corner stone of Marx’s social and political thought. As said above, The German Ideology, along with the ‘preface’ to the critique of Political Economy, is the seminal outline on Marx’s theory of historical materialism. In this book he focuses on three major premises which shaped his understanding of society and history. Let us have a brief discussion of these three premises on which his concept of historical materialism is outlined. First, Marx believes that the basic requirement for human beings to survive is to get food, shelter and clothing. Thus, the first and most important historical act is the act of production
of the means to satisfy human material needs such as food, shelter and clothing. (Marx, 1994, 107) A second assumption, according to Marx, is that human beings actually distinguish themselves from the animal world to the extent that they must produce their material needs of food, shelter and clothing on their own, and to this extent they enter into a conscious relation with the natural world in order to survive. The third premise of the materialist theory of history, according to Marx, is that the way in which human beings produce depends on what they find in nature and what they must produce to survive. How they exist and how they live, thus tends to ‘coincide’ with what they produce and how they produce, and the nature of individuals depends on the material conditions determining their production. (108) The understanding of historical and social development from the perspective of human economic activity is, thus, based on the above premises of Marx.

Marx’s concept of historical materialism is not just a perception and interpretation of historical developments, or a chronological study of historical events, it is a very crucial theoretical perception of human society and its developments in terms of production and productivity. This production is closely connected with the basic needs of subsistence. Therefore, I think, historical materialism is a perception of cultural creation, because with the creation of the means of production, men consciously unconsciously engage into creating cultural
artifacts. Along with the development of every society, a new, specific culture emerges.

Now, it is inevitable to have a close look at the indispensable concepts of ‘social being’ and ‘social consciousness’ in order to explore the deeper perception of historical materialism. Lorimer puts as:

Social consciousness is a reflection of social being. It may be a more or less correct reflection or it may be false. It does not determine the system of social life and the direction of social development, as the idealists assume. On the contrary, it is social being that ultimately determines social consciousness, the ideas, aspirations and aims of individuals and social classes. (2009, 36)

If social consciousness is the reflection of social being, then, what exactly is the concept of ‘social being’ which holds such an important place in Marx’s theory of historical materialism. “In philosophical materialism the category of being is regarded as identical with the concept of existence. Accordingly, social being is understood by Marxists as the material life of society, the material interactions and relations between people.” (36)

This means that materiality in social sense must not be identified with materiality in the sense of something, substantial, tangible. Of course, it is impossible for society to exist without the material, substantial embodiments of the achievements of human labor. The tools of labor, buildings, ploughed fields, canals are all the creation of human hands, this is materialization of human activity and ideas. But they are not the elements that make ‘social matter’, social matter is
made of the totality of the relationships humans enter into to maintain their existence. It includes the reproduction of people themselves, the system of social relations that forms between people while producing material needs of life, such as, the production, or economic relations and most importantly, the formation of the legal, political, religious, moral, artistic relation. (37)

Normally while speaking about social consciousness, we deliberately neglect everything individual and personal and consider the views and ideas that are characteristic of a particular society or social group as a whole. Though social consciousness is directly or indirectly created by individuals, it is not the sum total of individual’s ‘consciousness’ within a particular society. Rather, it is a qualitatively specific intellectual system, which, although engendered and conditioned ultimately by social being, has a relatively independent existence and makes a strong influence on every individual, compelling him or her to reckon with the historically shaped forms of social consciousness as something that is real, although non-material (38)

In its historically conditioned form, the social consciousness is a very part of the intellectual culture of society. Therefore intellectual culture has immense value in Marx’s materialistic study of history. Culture can be divided into material and intellectual culture. The making of tools and objects generally required to satisfy people’s material needs and it was impossible without the participation of their thinking. And at the same time, the products of intellectual effort – ideas,
artistic images, social norms and rules exist in a certain material form i.e. in books, paintings music, documents, and so on. Means, intellectual culture and material culture are interdependent and indispensable in human society. Again to quote Lorimer:

Intellectual culture comprises the results of people’s intellectual activity – science, philosophy, art, morals, politics, law and their corresponding institutions (research centres, schools, theatres, libraries, museums etc.) – and also the level of their intellectual, aesthetic and moral development. The concept of culture is connected with people’s accumulation of knowledge and experience in one or another field of activity, their assimilation and acceptance of a particular system of value and evolution of a certain pattern of behavior. (39)

According to Lorimer the concept of culture, as quoted above, is based on the accumulation of knowledge, its assimilation and acceptance of a particular value system that results into a certain pattern of behavior of given society. Indeed, the cultural personality of an individual is the result of all these social aspects discussed above. Marxian concept of historical materialism dreams of revolution out of class conflict between bourgeois and proletariat. Hence it is important to know whose ideas (One of the key aspects of culture) are dominant in society and why. Marx has given very brilliant and logical interpretation of domination of certain ideas of certain class, and this interpretation plays a pivotal role in Marx’s whole construction of the concept of historical materialism. Marx says:
The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships, grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age. Thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch. (1994, 129)

Thus, we can understand from above quotation that the economic domination plays the pivotal role in bringing about the ideological domination. It never happens; in any community that economic domination is maintained by one class and ideological domination by another class. Economic power and power of ideas go hand in hand. Ideas though are so great and beneficial for the humanity, but belong to the ruled classes, are never the dominant ideas. On the contrary, the ideas, though detrimental to humanity, but belong to the ruling class, are dominant ideas. Means, power is most important force in order to implement the ideas whatsoever.
The Concept of Ideology:

“The concept of ‘ideology’ did not originate in Marxism and is still in no way confined to it. Yet it is evidently an important concept in almost all Marxist thinking about culture, and especially about literature and ideas.” (Williams, 2010, 55)

Though, according to Williams, the concept of ideology did not originate in Marxism and not confined to it, but, truly it has very crucial place in Marx’s philosophical discourse. In order to understand the place of ‘ideology’ in Marxian philosophic system, we have to focus on three common versions of this concept introduced by Raymond Williams:

(I) a system of beliefs characteristics of a particular class or group;
(II) a system of illusory beliefs – false ideas or false consciousness – which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge;
(III) the general process of the production of meanings and ideas.”

(55)

These three common versions of the concept of ideology are highly suggestive and significantly compatible to the requirements of the present research. Williams bases these versions on his own contemplation of Marx’s thoughts related to the concept of ideology in association with the sporadic comments about culture. In first version, Williams categorically states that ideology is a system of belief belonging to a particular class. It means, ideology differs according to class. Any class is identified with certain ideology and vice-versa. Means, ideology is the ‘cultural identity’ of a certain class. In the second
version, Williams goes deeper and states that this system of beliefs, to which certain class is clinging, may be a system of illusory beliefs, it is false ideas or false consciousness. Here he is talking, probably, about the traditionally conditioned class with certain cultural habits. In fact this version is very close to the psychological conditioning, where a class loses its capacity to interrogate the validity of certain beliefs and consciousness and carries them for generations. These false beliefs and false consciousness is completely antithetical to the scientific knowledge and truth. The third version of the concept of ideology, according to Williams is a generalized process of production of certain meanings and ideas. This version is closely connected with Marx’s analysis of production relations.

Basically, it was Destutt Tracy who had coined the term ‘ideology’ in late eighteenth century. Intention behind the coinage of this term was philosophic, which meant, ‘science of ideas’ and, the science of ideas must be a natural science, since the origin of all ideas is in man’s experience of the world. (Williams, 2010, 56) For Destutt, Williams says,

‘Ideology is part of zoology’. “We have only an incomplete knowledge of an animal if we do not know his intellectual faculties. Ideology is a part of Zoology, and it is especially in man that this part is important and deserves to be more deeply understood.” (56)

However, many scholars erroneously give the credit of the coinage of the term ‘ideology’ to Karl Marx. In the early writings of Marx and Engels we find a
comprehensive analysis of the term ‘ideology’ by Marx. Particularly in 1845-46 Marx and Engels wrote *The Critique of the German Ideology* in which they criticized the concept of ideology in German philosophical context. The theory of ideology outlined by Marx and Engels was developed as a scathing criticism against a group of thinkers who followed Hegel. *The German Ideology*, in the beginning was intended as a critical attack on the young Hegelians, who, Marx and Engels thought, were the central ‘ideologists’ of German philosophical system. During those days young Hegelians had put forward a critical view of history and religion which argued that all reality was nothing more than the outward manifestation of internal human ideas actualized historically in concrete social and historical events. This resulted into the perception that the entire world history was nothing but an external expression of internal thoughts actualized as ideas in the outer world.

Marx developed his own theory of ideology against this background as a criticism of Hegelian philosophical system. There was a belief, at the root of Hegel’s philosophy, that historical forces are put in motion by ideas. Hegelians believed that the social and historical problems could be analyzed by looking at the role ideas played in socio-political life. Marx criticizes this Hegelian approach by objecting to the place of ideas assigned by Hegel. Marx believed that to consider ‘ideas’ as the real forces and thus have material existence is the fundamental error committed by the Hegelians. Marx’s belief, that Hegel’s
philosophy simply distorted external reality because Hegel thought that reality was manifestation of internal ideas. In this view philosophy itself can only be a distortion of reality because it always misrepresents reality by forcing it to conform to the philosophical picture of the world. (Morrison, 2012,61) In this connection Ken Morrison argues:

In direct opposition to this, Marx and Engels took the view that a theory of ideology was possible only if it showed that the actual ideas and conceptions people had of the outside world and of society originated from material activity and from material production. Accordingly, they put forward the theory of ideology in relation to the view that philosophy was a system of thought which tended to ‘invert’ the real world by turning it upside down in reality and by forcing it to conform to the philosophic picture of the world. (62)

Marx’s concept of ideology as it appears in The German Ideology is basically concerned with the notion of praxis. Though Marx dealt with the critique to ideology only once directly, there is no doubt that the subject always occupied a significant place in his thought. To understand this significance requires a very close reading of The German Ideology. Louis Dupre points out:

Equally important for understanding Marx’s evaluation of culture is his earlier discovery of the notion of praxis. Nor was his critique restricted to the term “ideology”. After his polemics with the Young Hegelians the term “ideology” receded almost as suddenly as it had risen to prominence. But the concept reemerges in the opposition structure superstructure in the preface to the critique of political Economy. Even that expression sets no limits to the discussion. Assumptions and casual remarks made in the later writings on economics and politics significantly contribute toward Marx’s over all critique of culture. (1980, 91-92)
Within this critique of culture, Marxian concept of ideology, as we know, plays a pivotal role. Attacking the Hegelian tradition of idealism, Marx puts his perception of ideology as direct antithesis of idealism. He argues in *The German Ideology* as appeared in the book *On Religion* thus:

The production of notions, ideas and consciousness is from the beginning directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of human beings, the language of real life. The production of men’s ideas, thinking, their spiritual intercourse, here appear as the direct efflux of their material condition. The same applies to spiritual production as represented in the language of politics, laws, morals, religion, metaphysics, etc. of people. The producers of men’s ideas, notions, etc., are men, but real active men as determined by a definite development of their productive forces up to its remotest form. Consciousness [das BewuBtsein] can never be anything else but conscious being [das bewuBte sein] and the being of men is their real life process. If in the whole of ideology men and their relations appear upside down as in a camera obscura this is due as much to their historical life process as the inversion of objects on the retina is due to their immediate physical life-process. (2008, 74)

Marx here again insists that the theoretical basis for asserting that our beliefs and conceptions are related to our material relationship and to material production originates in the first place from Marx’s own assertion that our ideas and conceptions of the outer world always have their origin in material activity. Since, for Marx material production was uppermost because it kept people alive by forming a material relation to the world and to life processes through economic production, he felt that all our ideas, conceptions and standpoints arise out of our material activity and they come to reflect this activity in our relation with others and the world. Ken Morrison specifies the point:
Marx and Engels, however, went beyond showing the material origins of ideas by arguing that our ideas and conceptions in fact came to represent our material relations with others, and that these ideas and conceptions ultimately function as lenses through which we come to see the world and have material relations with it. In this respect, ideology is a set of beliefs and standpoints through which we come to see the world, and as such it draws attention to one of the most fundamental ideas in Marx’s and Engel’s theory of ideology. (2012, 65)

This means that we don’t see the material world directly but rather through prevailing conceptions, ideas and beliefs. In short, these prevailing conceptions, beliefs, and ideas work as lenses through which we see the world form relations to it. Many people in the society believe that luck or destiny plays a key role in coming to understand how the world works and what happens to them in it. But, when we form a relation to the world based on fate or luck, we not only enact an imaginary view of the way the world works, but we also tend to enact an imaginary relations to reality because we consider that some external agency determines the outcome of things regarding our own providence before they actually occur. Marx maintains that this is an ideological relation to reality and to the material world. The people who believe in fate, think that some other forces which are beyond material world work in social relation. Marx believes that these kinds of beliefs are products of a distinct social framework rather than arising from the individual alone, and that they tend to show the extraordinary value we place on future determinations and results.

Above interpretation by Ken Morrison is close to modern connotation of the concept ‘ideology’. It focuses on the roots of the concept of ideology in
materialism or worldliness. Marx and Engels, while criticizing their German contemporaries, radically attacked the system of ‘thought’ and concentrated on its abstraction from the real processes of history. Raymond Williams, for instance, opines in this regard:

“Ideas, as they said specifically of the ruling ideas of an epoch, ‘are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationship grasped as ideas’. Failure to realize this produced ideology: an upside-down version to reality.” (1985, 155)

Ideology is identified, by Marx and Engels, with the dominant thought. In a Letter to Mehring (1893), as cited by Williams in his Keywords, Engels in this connection puts as:

Ideology is a process accomplished by the so called thinker consciously indeed but with a false consciousness. The real motives impelling him remain unknown to him; otherwise it would not be an ideological process at all. Hence he imagines false or apparent motives. Because it is a process of thought he derives both its form and its content from pure thought, either his own or his predecessors. (155)

Here the concept of ideology is considered as abstract and false thought, which is related to the original conservative use. In the German Ideology Marx has severely criticized the concept of ideology which is associated with German thinkers. In the ‘Preface’ of The German Ideology Marx says:

Until now men have constantly made up for themselves false conceptions about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be. They have arranged their relationship according to their ideas of God, of normal man etc. The phantoms of their brains have got out of their hands. They, the creators, have bowed down before their creations. Let us
liberate them from the chimeras, the ideas, dogmas, imaginary beings, under whose yoke they are languishing. Let us rebel against the rule of thoughts. (1994, 103)

Marx seems to be very satiric and contemptuous while attacking the young Hegelians. But in the very preface of *The German Ideology*, he declares his position as anti-idealist and announces a virtual war against the rule of thoughts. This rule of thought, according to Marx, is ‘ideology’ i.e. illusion, false consciousness, unreality, upside down reality (as in camera obscura). Marx has viewed the concept of ideology in utter derogatory sense. But Raymond Williams says: “Yet there is another, apparently more neutral sense of ideology in some parts of Marx’s writing, notable in the well-known passage in the contribution to the *Critique of Political Economy* (1859)” (156). Let us see what Marx says in this passage:

... it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic condition of production ... and the legal, political religious, aesthetic or philosophic – in short, ideological – forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. (211)

This passage is clearly related to his earlier sense of conceptualization i.e. the ideological forms are expressions of economic conditions of production. But they are viewed here as the forms in which men become conscious of the conflict arising from conditions and changes of condition in economic production. Williams argues:
In fact, in the last century, this sense of ideology as the set of ideas which arise from a given set of material interests or, more broadly, from a definite class or group, has been at least as widely used as the sense of ideology as illusion. Moreover, each sense has been used, at times very confusingly, within the Marxist tradition. (1985, 156)

Though, in Marxist writing, the concept of ideology is used confusingly, the later Marxist thinkers, especially Lenin, used this concept as ‘ideology of a class’, not of specifically ‘bourgeois’. In a Letter to the Federation of the North, cited by Williams in his book Keywords, he says:

Socialism, insofar as it is the ideology of struggle of the proletarian class, undergoes the general conditions of birth, development and consolidation of an ideology, that is to say it is founded on all the material of human knowledge, it presupposes a high level of science, demands scientific work, etc. … In the class struggle of the proletariat which develops spontaneously, as an elemental force, on the basis of capitalist relations, socialism is introduced by the ideologists. (157)

The concept of ideology seems to be neutralized by Lenin. Means, ‘ideology’ is not a specific phenomena belonging to just bourgeois, or capitalists. Ideas, beliefs, belonging to any class or society, are ideology of that certain class. Hence – ‘Proletariat ideology’ or ‘bourgeois ideology’. More simple and comprehensive interpretation is given by Ken Morrison. He says:

In order to look more closely at the theory of ideology and to understand how Marx developed the concept, five broad building blocks will be discussed. First, is the relation between ideas and material activity in society; second, is the relation between the concept of ideology and a theory of perception; third, is the relationship between ideology and dominant classes; fourth, are the main social functions of ideology and fifth, is the relation between ideology and the relations of production where we look at how one’s position in the relation of production affect how others see us. (2012, 68)
According to Ken Morrison, the link between ideas and material activity in society is the first building block related to Marx’s theory of ideology. (68) Here he focuses on two issues comprised in this link. First, he maintains that since every society had different methods of producing, it means their material relation to reality will always reflect the way they produce. For instance, in ancient societies, Romans maintained that slaves were valueless because Romans elevated themselves in the world by refusing to labor, and consequently believed that all labor was degrading. (68) Second, as discussed earlier, Marx maintained that ideas have their origin in material and productive activity and that the production of ideas is associated with material activity. Marx argued that, the very first thing human beings do is produce the material means of their existence, and that this production is so central to their material well-being that the subsequent shape of society always seem to coincide with the way they produce. Further the manner in which this production is carried out, determines the system of social relations which tends to arise from it, so much so that it creates the division of society into classes, one is dominant and other is subordinate. The dominant class owns the material means of production, and the other, subordinate class, is made the subject to the will of dominant class. Ken Morrison very pertinently argues that:

… we can see that the system of social relations always reflects the prevailing material social relations of production, and as such two important points can be drawn from this: first, the act of economic production necessitates the formation of classes which shapes social relations and the structure of society. Second, the production carried on between the classes
gives rise to a system of conceptions, ideas and beliefs which come to represent the productive relations that stand as ‘conscious images in mental life.’ Marx therefore reasoned that the ideas individuals have are always related to the ways they produce and the class relations they form in the system of production. (69)

A second building block of the theory of ideology, according to Morrison is the way ideology is related to a theory of perception. Means, how men perceive the outer world from the standpoint of their position in the relation of production. Marx believed that we do not ever encounter the material world directly but rather only indirectly through the lenses and filters of our ideas, which are always related to material activity. Further, men tend to form a conception of the way the world works, and in this sense, their ideological practices function to explain what takes place in the world in relation to their live material connection to the existing productive and class relations. (69)

Here, if we try to define the concept of ideology as a system of attitudes, conceptions, ideas, standpoints and beliefs which are capable of inverting our perception of reality, we have to show how these ideas and beliefs have the power to change our perception of the world as such. As commented on J. Larrain’s views on Ideology Morrison interprets that Marx’s theory of ideology becomes a theory of perception. As discussed earlier, according to Marx, we do not perceive the outer world directly through our sense, but rather through our ideas and conception of the way the world works, then the question is: how do our ideas act to distort our perception of reality by making social relations distorted in
perception and in what way does society deceive men into believing that these perceptions are acceptable substitutes for reality? (2012, 69) In this connection Morrison argues:

An example of this can be found in the class system of feudal society. In feudalism, the prevailing economic and religious conceptions of those at the top and those of the bottom of the class structure acted as a material justification for the serf’s economic inequality in relation to the landholder. Marx and Engels thought that in the period where religious ideas were dominant, conceptions about the way the world works and what happens to us in life, as well as what becomes of us after we are gone, somehow got inverted by a religious conceptions of the way the world works. In fact, it was from certain religious ideas and standpoints that specific relations to the world and to God were born and among these was the idea that we should not expect too much from the world; and that we should look to the next world for compensation for our suffering and hardship. (70)

Marx stresses that specific way of perceiving the world turns things upside down, means, it constitute an inversion because it conceives of reality as full of suffering, and the next world as substitute for the real world, as a compensation from suffering. As a result of this conception about the way the world works, the serf carried out economic tasks and material activities which benefit the landholder and disadvantage the serf. And, interestingly, serf accepts these conditions as the essential social and material to their life.

The third building block, according to Morrison, in the theory of ideology is the relation between ‘ideology and the interests of the dominant classes.’ (72) Marx states: “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling
intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that there by, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.” (Szeman and Kaposy, 2011, 169)

According to Marx, the ideas represent the economic interests and dominant material relations of one class over another. This means that in each period of history, the dominance of one class leads to a group of persons who act as ‘ideologists’, i.e. persons or agents who disseminate ideas and beliefs which represent the dominant material interest of the ruling classes.

The fourth building block, according to Morrison, in the Marx’s concept of ideology is functions of ideology in the society. Morrison puts:

Generally speaking, Marx argued that ideology performed three basic functions: it legitimates the existing class system in which one class monopolizes the material means of production; it makes the subordinate classes politically passive and accepting of the ideas of the dominant classes; and it tends to conceal the class division and class conflict resulting from the inequality in society and the coercive nature of the class system by making this inequality appear to be acceptable. (2012,75)

This interpretation of Morrison again indicates Marxian treatment of the concept of ideology as a prerogative of the dominant class. ‘Ideology’ is supposed to be, by Marx, as an instrument to maintain domination over the subordinate classes. Most important function of ideology is sanctioning the existing class system in which one class owns and controls the material means of production.
Basically, the primary function of ideology is to make class distinctions and the existing material differences between classes disappear altogether, so that they appear to be legitimate distinctions rather than contradictory ones.

The fifth building block, according to Morrison, in Marx’s concept of ideology, has to do with the role played by ‘the relations of production and the prevailing social conception about how we come to see those who are outside the legitimizing sphere of the economy.’ (73) Marx believed that ideology grew out of the economic structure of society and our material relations and relationships with the system of production. As we already saw, a system of ideas arises out of material production in society which represents the dominant class. This system of ideas stands as ‘conscious image in mental life.’ Further, Marx maintained that, the system of ideas comes out of the way people produce and that these ideas always seem to reflect the dominant material and class relationships in society. In this regard, Marx believed that the dominant economic material relationships and ideas always reflect the existing class relations, and hence, he declares the concept of ideology is always class based.

We have discussed the concept of ideology in various ways with its contradictory shifts in Marx, Engels and Lenin. Still it seems to be very difficult to locate the concept of ideology in cultural context because it has many connotations and, no uniformity can be maintained in order to generalize the use of the concept. “Finally” to quote Raymond Williams:
There is an obvious need for a general term to describe not only the product but the processes of all signification, including the signification of values. It is interesting that ‘ideology’ and ‘ideological’ have been widely used in this sense. Volosinov, for example, use ‘ideological’ to describe process of the production of meaning through signs, and ‘ideology’ is taken as the dimension of social experience in which meanings and values are produced. ……. In Marx, in Engels, and in much of the Marxist tradition the central argument about ‘practical consciousness’ was limited and frequently distorted by failures to see that the fundamental processes of social signification are intrinsic to ‘practical consciousness’ and intrinsic also to the ‘conceptions, thoughts, and ideas’ which are recognizable as its products. (2010, 70)

- **Basis and Superstructure:**

Nowadays Marx’s concept of base and superstructure is considered as one of the central concepts in cultural theory because it provides the necessary ground to judge and analyse various aspects of Cultural Studies. At the same time any modern approach to the Marxian theory of culture must begin by taking into account the concept of determining base and a determined superstructure. From a strictly theoretical point of view, it would be crucial to discuss the concept of base and superstructure which plays a vital role in the transition from Marx to Marxism, and in the development of Marxism as theoretical school.

A detailed discussion of the concept of base and superstructure is found in well known passage in Marx’s 1859 preface to *A contribution to the critique of Political Economy*:

> In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of
development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of productions constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in 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 have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic – in short, ideological – forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. (1994, 211)

In fact, base and superstructure is a metaphor in which we can locate the idea that culture is determined by the production and the organization of material existence. While commenting on this concept Raymond Williams says:

Transformation of the ‘entire immense superstructure’, in the social revolution which begins from the altered relations of productive forces and relations of production, is a process in which ‘men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out’ in ‘ideological forms’ which now include the ‘religious, aesthetic, or philosophic’ as well as the legal and political. (2010, 76)

Marx considers economic system as the base and everything other can be included in superstructure. The economic structure, the real foundation of society, is constituted by relations of productions on which the superstructure of legal,
political, spiritual, aesthetic, religious, artistic aspects of human life; is erected. It means economy is the basis, the most important foundation of society that influences all the other aspects of human relationship. Williams argues that:

Thus it would be possible, simply from this passage, to define ‘cultural’ (religious, aesthetic or philosophic’) forms in which ‘men become conscious of this conflict’, without necessarily supposing hat these specific forms are the whole of ‘cultural’ activity (76)

Thus economic basis is undoubtedly the basis of cultural activities (religious, philosophic, ideological, aesthetic etc.) This economic basis is the ‘real foundation’ of legal and political superstructures and that not only influences the superstructure but ‘determines’ it. In this way economic mode of production shapes the ‘cultural’ superstructure. In order to make this concept of base and superstructure more intelligible, Chris Barker has given a figure which will be very much helpful to understand the concept:

(Figure of Base and superstructure in Marxist Theory
Note: Arrow indicates relations of determinations.
(Barker: 2012, 56))

In this figure we can notice that art, culture and politics are the products of the relations of production and means of production. Art, culture, and politics are controlled by the class which controls means of production. As said earlier, superstructure (Art, culture, politics, moral, ideology etc.) is influenced by
economic base, but this is not a unilateral process; because base is also influenced by the superstructure. Means, this is reciprocal process. K. N. Pannikar argues, “In fact in Marx’s scheme, the base and superstructure not only interdependent but interpenetrate as well.” (1990, 3) Panikkar’s argument is, in fact based on Engels’ interpretation of the concept of base and superstructure. Let us see, for the purpose of our discussion, what Engels has to say:

Political, juridical, literary, artistic, etc., development is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic basis. It is not that the economic condition is the cause and alone active, while everything else has a passive effect. (4)

Now, when we think of literature and culture, from Engels’s point of view, it seems that literature and culture play a seminal role beside the other elements in superstructure. The production of literature and culture as the inevitable part of superstructure remains in tune with the economic basis, i.e. literature and culture function to strengthen the economic basis of society. And at the same time, economic basis is influenced by literature and culture. Doug Lorimer, while examining the notion of base and superstructure, adopts a broader perspective. He argues:

The basis and superstructure are the fundamental structural elements of any socio-economic formation. They characterize its qualitative uniqueness, the difference between it and other formation. Besides the basis and superstructure, a socio-economic formation includes other elements of social life (everyday affairs, sexual relations and so on), but it is the basis and the superstructure that determine the specific nature of the formation as a complete social organism. (2009, 114)
He further adds:

“Basis and superstructure are relative concepts, defining two distinct levels of social development. The basis is the economic structure of society, the sum-total of the production relation of the given society. The concept of the basis expresses the social function of the production relations as the economic basis of social phenomena that are outside the sphere of material production. While they are a form of the productive forces, the production relations at the same time determine the content of the superstructural forms. The superstructure is the some-total of “ideological” social relation that arise on the given economic basis, i.e. the sum total of social relations that are consciously created by people.” (116)

By entering into production relation, people require institutions to regulate or manage their social relations. Production is always managed in the interest of a particular class, with social regulation with a purpose to maintain a particular mode of exploitation. And, the institutions of social regulation turn into institutions of class rule. There will also be the efforts of resistance and self-protection on the part of the exploited or non-ruling classes.

Legal, political, spiritual, literary, cultural, artistic, and economic ideas, programs and modes of thought get organized against the functions of management and class rule in order to resist the existing form of rule. This is the most immediate and direct way in which intellectual processes are connected with the economic structure of a given socio-economic formation. Doug Lorimer pertinently argues in this connection:

Every socioeconomic formation has its basis and corresponding superstructure. The superstructure like the basis, is therefore historically specific in character. Depending on what kind of economic basis, what classes a given society possesses, it will be dominated by the corresponding political, legal, religious and philosophical views and also institutions corresponding to these views. It is quite impossible for the economy of a country to be dominated by feudal lords or
capitalists while in politics, in the legal system and in intellectual life, the predominant role is played by the working people. Such an incongruity could not possibly exist for any length of time. The relations of production in feudal or bourgeois society are class relations. And the class that holds the dominant position in the given economic structure naturally holds the dominant position in the ideological sphere, establishes its political domination, creates and passes laws preserving this economic and political domination, and therefore also holds the dominating position throughout the superstructure. (115)

What is most important in this argument is– in bourgeois society, production relations are class relations, and the dominant class in economic structure, naturally holds the dominant position in ideological sphere and establishes its political power, frames laws to preserve this domination and therefore dominates the superstructure. Now let us see the function of superstructure in Doug Lorimer’s view. He points out:

The social function of the superstructure is to protect, fortify and develop its basis. In class-divided society, the superstructure ensures the political and ideological supremacy of the class that holds the dominant position in the economy. It does this not only through ideological means, but also through other forms of social control. The state, for example, also employs coercion, includes such material factors as army, police force, courts and prisons. (117)

The function of superstructure as mentioned by Lorimer is close to Gramsci’s concept of Hegemony and Althusser’s concept of ISA (Institutional State Apparatus). In fact the base and superstructure has been challenged by many neo-Marxist philosophers, because there is a theoretical room for this challenge.
Hence it will be necessary to examine this concept, as a necessity of this research, in Indian cultural space which we will do in the further stage of this study.

- **The Concept of Religion:**

  Though Marx has made certain radical pronouncements about religion, but they are not based on any systematic study of religion. In fact, the major part of Marx’s writings on religion is polemical in nature. Despite this, Marx’s concept of religion is worth consideration because of the reputation it enjoys in the whole intellectual tradition. And most importantly, Marx’s influence has been so unprecedented and dramatic that any study of critical analysis of religion cannot be completed without him.

  Feuerbach’s *The Essence of Christianity* was one of the most important philosophical events in Germany since the death of Hegel. Basically it was a crucial reaction against Hegel besides being the culmination of the radical Neo-Hegelian movement. Feuerbach argued in this book that the antithesis of divine and human is altogether illusory. He says:

  God as the epitome of all realities or perfections is nothing other than a compendious summary devised for the benefit of the limited individual, an epitome of the generic human qualities distributed among men, in the self realization of the species in the course of world history. (1979, 16)

  Here Feuerbach wants to argue that people belong to a material world in which an individual is not alone. He is, in fact part of a collectivity. This collectivity is the real being and the individual man is simply a particular instance
of the life of the collectivity or species. According to Feuerbach, God is an idealized form of this species. This idealized generic man is projected as God and entertained by the individual as his object of worship. Therefore religion is human self-worship results in man’s self-alienation.

Man is divided into two beings: the idealized generic self and the limited and imperfect individual self. When man realized this in history, he immediately began to feel worthless. Feuerbach again says:

“Religion is the disuniting of man from himself; he sets God before him as the antithesis of himself. God is infinite; man the finite being; God almighty, man weak; God holy, man sinful. God and man are extremes. God is the absolutely positive, the sum of all realities, man the absolutely negative, comprehending all negations.” (33)

Feuerbach’s arguments play a major role in the formulation and development of Marx’s theoretical interpretations. Feuerbach considers that man is intrinsically a creative being who enjoys productive activity. But by allowing God as the source of productive activity, man alienates himself from his own productive activity. The following argument of Feuerbach focuses on the idea of productive activity:

The idea of activity, of making, of creating, is in itself a divine idea; it is therefore unhesitatingly applied to God. In acting man feels himself free, unlimited, happy; in passivity, limited, oppressed, unhappy. Activity is the positive sense of one’s personality …. And the happiest, the most blissful activity is that which is productive. To read is delightful, reading is passive acting; but to produce what is worthy to be read is more delightful still …. Hence this attribute of the species productive activity is assigned to God… (217-18)
This may be treated as Feuerbach’s theory of alienation in religion. On this philosophical stand of Feuerbach, K. P. Shankar in *Marx and Freud on Religion* comments:

History remains as the very same drama of self-realization, with all other Hegelian sub-plots of externalization, alienation and final transcendence of the alienation by an act of knowing. But in this drama of unfolding, however, the being that unfolds and finally realizes itself in history is the human species itself. The initial act of self-externalization of God triggers off the beginning of a phase of human alienation in religion and it extends all the way to the present time. What Feuerbach accomplished by this inversion of Hegel is a vast change in morel Perspective. To put man in place of the Hegelian Absolute is to create new dimensions of values for human beings. Man is no longer a sub-plot in the Hegelian drama but he is main theme. Feuerbach did not go further than this. It was left for Marx to develop later this anthropological restatement of Hegel in a systematic way. (1986, 23)

In Marx’s famous *Economic and philosophical Manuscripts*, he claims Feuerbach to be the only person who maintains a serious and a critical attitude to the philosophy of Hegel. According to Marx, Feuerbach made real discoveries in the field of philosophy. Feuerbach’s great achievements, according to K. P. Shankar are:

1. To have shown that philosophy is nothing more than religion brought into thought and developed in thought, and that it is equally to be condemned as another form and mode of existence of the estrangement of man’s nature.
2. To have founded true materialism and real science by making the social relation of ‘man to man’ the basic principle of his theory.
3. To have opposed to the negation of negation, which claims to be the absolute positive, the positive which is based upon itself and positively grounded in itself. (24)

Marx seems to be accepting Feuerbachian position as Feuerbachian restatement of Hegel. But there is certain point where Marx departs from Feuerbach. Particularly on the Feuerbachian concept of alienation in religion, Marx departs and says man is indeed, alienated as Feuerbach says, but according to Marx this alienation can be terminated by changing the world. He says:

“The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways: the point is to change it.” (Marx and Engels, 2008, 72) This argument of Marx must be treated as a background against which we should seek the reasons for Marx’s criticism of Feuerbach and his whole interpretation and critique of religion. Marx does not accept the Feuerbachian remedy for ending alienation. He criticizes Feuerbachian solution because he fears that Feuerbachian humanism amounted to nothing but a secular substitute for traditional religion, replacing the worship of God with the worship of man-as-such. (70) Hegel’s transformation of theology into logic was challenged by Feuerbach and transformed logic in anthropology. In this transformation Marx accepts greatness of Feuerbach as a thinker. Feuerbach had transformed Hegel’s revealed God as the revealed man. “In other words, the image of man as manifestation of the divine substance gives way to the image of God as manifestation of the human substance.” (Shankar, 1986, 25)
This transformation of logic into anthropology, though was a big achievement, in the field of speculative philosophy, it did not attain anything other than the worship of man-as-such. Here, Marx begins to criticize Feuerbach. K. P. Shankar opines:

“I think Marx’s re-interpretation of Hegel played a crucial role in developing the “Theses on Feuerbach.” Marx wrote his Critique of Hegel’s Dialectics and General Philosophy in 1844, a few months before writing his, “Theses on Feuerbach.” (25)

The history of production is nothing but a history of man’s own self-externalization which is anthropological and formulates the essence of the Marxian vision. (43) Here, it seems necessary to understand Marx’s views on the concept of alienation because as man progresses in history he also breaks up the highly uniform society which results into his alienation. (43)

Roughly, the term alienation means man’s species – being, which is objectified in his created world, appears before the concrete individuals as an alien, hostile and destructive force, and impoverishes them physically and morally, and degrades and depersonalizes them. (Marx, 1977, 324)

So far as alienation in religious life is concerned, Marx proposes a critique of religion in order to unveil the degree of human estrangement involved in religion. This sort of critique intends to create conditions which would enable man to overcome self-deception.
Of course, Marx’s critique of religion contains certain inconsistencies and inadequacies in understanding, which should be taken into consideration before going for his analysis of religion. In fact Marx poses, while making certain pronouncements about religion, as if he has studied all the religions exist in the world. It must be noted the Marx’s polemical pronouncements about religion are mainly concerned with Christianity. K. P. Shankar rightly raises a question.

“Can this be attributed to his ignorance of other religions?” (1986,45) It is true that Marx knew Christianity well, but for him Hinduism, Buddhism etc. are the religions of social orders, the products of what he declared as the Asiatic mode of production. This certainly indicates Marx’s inadequacy in the understanding of other religions than Christianity.

Capitalistic mode of production, according to Marx is more advanced than the Asiatic mode of production. Therefore, religious manifestation of the Capitalistic mode is more developed than the Asiatic mode of production. In this connection Engel’s views are very crucial. He says:

In all previous religions ritual had been the main thing. Only by taking part in the sacrifices and procession and in the orient by observing the most detailed diet and cleanliness precepts, could one show to what religion one belonged……. Christianity knew no processions of the classic world. By thus rejecting all national religions and their common ceremonies and addressing itself to all people, without distinction it became the first possible world religion…. Thanks, mainly to the elements mentioned above, Christianity won the day. (Marx, 1975, 177-179)
Since Marx and Engels considered Christianity as the most advanced religion, they took it for granted that it is also the most developed representative of all other religions.

With this background, we will study Marx’s analysis of religion as alienation. Marx brings out three crucial aspects out of his critique of religion. According to K. P. Shankar, these three aspects are:

(a) Religion is an expression of alienated life.
(b) Religion is false consciousness, that is ‘reversed consciousness’.
(c) Throughout history, religion performed two functions, which are as follows:
   i. To justify established social order and thereby support the dominant class.
   ii. To console the exploited, at the same time, by offering them in heaven what they have been denied on earth; this is essentially a reactionary role. (1986, 46-47)

Here Marx wants to establish religion as the product of alienation. He maintains that, religion is, the self-consciousness and self-feeling of man who has either not yet found himself or has already lost himself. (Marx and Engels, 1975, 38)

After these two stages which represent alienation in two different aspects, it is very much necessary to reproduce a quotation from the first volume of Marx’s Capital as cited by K. P. Shankar:

Those ancient social organizations of production are, as compared with bourgeois society, extremely simple and transparent. But they are founded either on immature development of man individually who has not yet severed the umbilical cord that unites him with fellow-men in a primitive
tribal community…… This narrowness is reflected in the ancient worship of nature, and in the other elements of the popular religions. (1986,47)

Here Marx is talking about that certain stage of man where he is still tied with ‘umbilical cord’ that connects him with his fellow-men. At this stage man has not yet grown as an individual. And he enjoys beastial consciousness. This stage is considered by Marx as ‘not finding oneself’. In this situation, Marx maintains:

The external world confronts men as a completely alien, all powerful and unassailable force, with which men’s relations are purely animal and by which they are overawed like beast; it is thus a purely animal consciousness of nature (nature worship). (Marx and Engels, 1976, 50)

In primitive stage man was made to worship the nature when, in fact, he had what is considered as the beastial consciousness. About the second stage of man i.e. ‘loosing oneself’, K. P. Shankar comments:

As human productivity increases, Max thinks, it is an absolute necessity in order to progress, that human beings break up from the original unit of society when they attain individual consciousness. At this stage, social forces begin to be active forces which confront man as equally alien and at first equally impenetrable, dominating him with the same apparent natural necessity as the forces of nature themselves. (1986, 48)

Major portion of Marx’s critique of religion is chiefly concerned with nature and process of alienation and he enquires into all the forms of alienation. According to Himel Shagor alienation can be grouped as: “Product – alienation (resulting in fetishism) and self-alienation (resulting in religion). Product alienation was a symptom of work-alienation (due to exploitation and
dehumanization) and these alienation types inflamed alienation – from – others, alienation – from nature and alienation-from-species-being.” (http://muktomona.net/Articles/himel_shagor)

We have briefly discussed the alienation-from-nature. Since it is beyond the scope of this research to discuss every type of alienation, we, as the requirement of this study, will focus on self alienation which results in religion. For Marx what is self-alienation, can best be understood from the very famous passage from his *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law*. He says:

Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people. (Marx and Engels, 2008, 42)

Marx declares religion as the opium of the people because he believes that the purpose of religion is to create illusory fantasies for the poor people. Economic situations deny real happiness in this life, so religion assures them that they will find true happiness in the next life. Marx maintains that people are in distress and religion provides solace, just as people who are physically injured get relief from opiate contained drugs. But Marx suggests that this relief is temporary; after the influence of the opiate is over, the suffering, pain will reoccur. Religion does not diagnose the underlying causes of people’s pain and suffering, on the contrary, it helps them forget their pain and suffering and causes them to think of an imaginary future which will be ideal. According to Marx the causes behind the
suffering are the economic circumstances, which need to be changed. But religion does not work to change the circumstances. And paradox is, according to Marx, the oppressors who are responsible for the pain and suffering are administering the ‘drug’. Himel Shagor says: “Religion is an expression of more fundamental unhappiness and symptom of more fundamental and oppressive economic realities.” (http://mukto-mona.net/Articles/himel_shagor)

Engels too, suggests that certain dominating groups, who wanted to preserve the existing social and political order in order to safeguard their material interests, adhered to Catholicism. It means, according to the founders of Marxism, religion reflects the interests of the dominating class. K. P. Shankar very pertinently puts: “While sanctifying the established social order, religion also consoles the oppressed by offering them in heaven what they have been denied upon earth.” (1986, 54)

Therefore, Marx, in the introduction of *Critique of Hegel’s philosophy of Rights*, declares religion as “the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless situations.” (Marx and Engels 2008, 42)

Hence religion is, for Marx, “opium of the people.” Religion, being a ‘sigh’ of the oppressed people, provides man with beliefs enabling them to seek happiness in fantasy for their unbearable sufferings in the real world. In this way religion becomes the ideology for the oppressed classes.
Marx, after diagnosing the causes of suffering of the poor people, goes further and provides the panacea for this suffering. He says:

The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness. The demand to give up the illusions about its condition is the demand to give up a condition which needs illusions. The criticism of religion is therefore in embryo the criticism of the value of the woe, the halo of which is religion. (42)

Marx says that certain conditions are responsible for the suffering of the people, those conditions must be eradicated in order to achieve real happiness. Means, people should abolish the religion which is an illusory happiness.

**The Concept of Class:**

Nineteenth century is prominently marked with debates and discussions of the concept of class. This is the distinguishing feature of nineteenth century, compared to the previous centuries. Hence a perception of class, class consciousness and consequential struggle in Marxian vocabulary accord perceptible relevance to the problem of this study. Doug Lorimer defines social classes as:

Social classes are large groups of people into which society is divided. But there are many other large groups in society, divided on different principles from those which divide classes. There are age groups, for instance (young and old generations,) groups based on sex, race, nationality, occupation. Some of these divisions have a physical basis (age, sex), while others are purely social in origin (nationality, occupation). The physical differences between people do not in themselves cause social distinctions and only under certain social circumstances may be connected with social inequality. Thus, racial inequality is historical, not natural, in origin.
Racial groups themselves are social categories, not biological categories. (2009, 139)

The fact can be accepted on the basis of above quotation that the society is divided in various groups/classes. These classes are not at all biological categories or natural categories but historical and manmade. Then certain questions regarding classes must necessarily be taken into consideration. These are – why do classes exist at certain stages in the process of development of society? What are social classes exactly? What position do class relations occupy in social life? In order to understand the very complex phenomena caused by class relations, we need to search answers of above questions. “This class approach to the analysis of the life of any society divided into classes is one of the fundamental methodological principles of Marxism.” (139)

Formulation of classes, according to Lorimer, was made in two ways:

The first was through the emergence out of the Neolithic village communes of the river valleys of the Tigris and Euprates in southern Iraq and the Nile valley in Egypt of a stratum of specialists who developed and monopolized the knowledge and skills needed to direct large-scale public works. (141)

The second way, according to Lorimer, in which classes were formulated, was “by means of the enslavement of the members of other tribes conquered in battle or of the impoverished members of one’s own tribe who had fallen into debt. This was the general pattern out of which the slave owning societies emerged in ancient Greece and, later in ancient Rome, in the 1st millennium BC.” (141)
Marx, however, for the first time provided scientific analysis of the nature of classes and the causes for their germination. At the same time he introduced the method and means to destruct the classes. In his scientific analysis of classes, Karl Marx connected the existence of classes with certain historical phases in the development of social production. On the contrary bourgeois sociologists considered that classes are eternal or extra-historical phenomena. They maintained that the people will always be divided into two classes rich and poor. But Marx gave the scientific analysis of historical transition of class society and proved how, why and when there will be end of class society. Since capitalist society was the last historical phase according to Marx which would be replaced by the classless society. Lorimer puts: “The path leading to classless society, Marx maintained, lies through the proletariat’s class struggle against all forms of oppression, aimed at establishing its class rule in society.” (141)

In capitalist society there are classes which are dichotomous in nature. And there is class conflict, because there is oppression. Therefore proletariat’s class struggle against exploitation, oppression is necessary which would be aiming at establishing its rule. This would lead towards classless society. What exactly was in the mind of Marx regarding class struggle is written by him to Joseph Weydemeyr in 1852. Marx writes in this letter as cited by Lorimer:

No credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists
the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: 1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production, 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society.” (142)

Now, what Marx specifically considers the constituent of the concept of class must be seen in his definition which he propounded in his – *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. He puts as quoted by Lorimer:

In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of other classes, and put than in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class.” (142)

Here economic conditions of existence are considered as crucial in which large numbers of families live with common interests, common way of making of living and a common culture that separates them from other large numbers of families in the society. These classes always have the antagonistic relations with other such classes.

Once we accept the class division in society, then we arrive at the position to understand Marx’s explanation of how class divisions are intrinsically connected to exploitative relations of production in the given society. Lorimer again cites Marx:

The specific economic form in which unpaid surplus labour is pumped out of the direct producers, determines the relationship of domination and servitude, as this grows directly out of production itself and reacts back on it as a determinant. On this is based the entire configuration of the economic community
arising from the actual relations of production, and hence also its specific political form. It is in each case the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the immediate producers – a relationship whose particular form naturally corresponds to a certain level of development to the type and manner of labour, and hence to its social productive power – in which we find the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social edifice, and hence also the political form of the relationship of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the specific form of the state in each case. (142)

In this passage Marx categorically differentiates between the “owners of the conditions of production” and the “immediate producers.” The owners of the conditions of production, Marx uses very pertinent verb, “pump” unpaid surplus labour from the immediate producers. It clearly means, the relations of production in a class-divided society are of domination, exploitation, and subordination. This is on account of the fact that the ruling class, i.e. owners of the conditions of production, has a monopoly of the decisive means of production. Commenting on Marx’s view of class division Lorimer says:

The relationship of the classes to the means of production also depends on their role in the social organization of labour. Classes perform various functions in social production: in class-divided society some of them manage production, control the economy and all social affairs and are engaged predominantly in mental work, while others bear the whole burden of compulsory, arduous physical labour. (143)

In class divided society, two classes predominantly emerge which remain antithetical with each other. In the early writings of Marx, such as The German Ideology, The Communist Manifesto, The 1844 Manuscripts and The Poverty of Philosophy; we can find the conceptualization of social classes by him. The
concept of class became the key aspect of sociological, cultural and literary debate initiated by the thinkers like Gramsci, Laclau and Mouffe, E.O. Wright, Lukacs, Michelle Barret and others. As a subject of historical discussion, the concept of class figured explicitly in *The Communist Manifesto*, which may be considered as the seminal basis for the entire discussion and debate initiated by the above mentioned thinkers. Marx, in *The Communist Manifesto*, identifies the concept of class, formation of class, class struggle in this way:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild – master and journey man in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden fight, a fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations. (2002, 219)

According to Marx, history is nothing but class struggle. He has, in this quotation, mentioned two classes in every society such as freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf etc. which are always in conflict. Since this is an unequal division of society, the classes stand in constant opposition, as he believes. There is an uninterrupted fight that ends in either revolution or reconstitution of society in common ruin of the classes. Marx’s observation is very crucial when he says that in history almost everywhere there is a complicated
arrangement of society into divergent orders, a multilayered gradation of social
rank. Here, Marx through his observation pinpoints that there are only two
possibilities of class struggle i.e. revolutionary reconstitution of society and
common ruin of the societies.

Which are the two classes Marx is talking about? The answer is obviously
bourgeois and proletariat. Let us see how Marx clarifies this in *The communist
Manifesto*.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins
of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It
has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression,
new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeois, possesses, however,
this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms.
Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great
hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other:
Bourgeois and Proletariat.” (220)

In this way, in a fundamental sense, Marx identifies only two classes, the
bourgeois and the proletariat. These fundamental classes significantly denote the
ideology of their respective classes, i.e. bourgeois ideology and proletarian
ideology.

• *Communism:*

Marx’s concept of communism can be treated as the culmination of his
whole philosophic and ideological endeavor. Before we discuss this concept, the
last paragraph of *The Communist Manifesto* must be cited here. Marx and Engels
say in this paragraph:
The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE! (2002, 258)

Through this quotation we can draw certain conclusions which focus on the socio-political characteristics of the concept of communism. First, Marx categorically declares that the aims and the views of communism are crystal clear. Second, communism must be established by overthrowing forcibly the existing social system, means, antagonist class society which results out of every class struggle. Third, the communist revolution will destroy the chains of exploitation of the proletarians and provide an opportunity to win the world. And, fourth, in order to bring the communist revolution in all the countries, the workers of the respective countries must come together. Marx’s clarion call to the workers of all countries is the manifestation of the spirit of internationalism in his philosophy of communism. In this connection Alex Callinicos brilliantly interprets the concluding sentence of *The Communist Manifesto*:

The famous concluding words of *The Communist Manifesto*—‘WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!’ (cw vi 519)—are thus no mere flourish of the pen, no mere ethical or emotional commitment to the brotherhood of man. The international victory of the working class is an absolute practical necessity if communism is to be built. The conquest of power by the working class in one country could only be the prelude to such a victory, and the first task of the dictatorship of the proletariat in that country would be to spread the revolution internationally. (2004, 164)
Marx, as we have mentioned earlier, believes that there are many transitory phases from capitalism to communism. The materialistic interpretation of the development of human society, as projected by Marx, also insists on the gradual but inevitable shifts into various phases of class relations which culminate into abolition of private property and abolition of antagonistic classes and class relations. Marx argues:

All property relations in the past have continually been subject to historical change consequent upon the change in historical condition.

The French Revolution, for example, abolished feudal property in favor of bourgeois property.

The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property. But modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products, that is based on class antagonism on the exploitation of the many by the few.

In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property. (2004, 235)

Communism is certainly a seminal political concept in Marxist thought but it has inevitable dimensions of social, cultural and philosophic meanings which must not be kept aside. Free and all-round development of the people is the expected ultimate result of communist revolution. Marx puts in The Communist Manifesto:

When, in course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeois is compelled, by the force
of circumstances, to organize itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class and, as such, sweeps always by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonism and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonism, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. (2002, 244)

Further, Marx explains the concept of communism as overcoming the alienation. He argues in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*:

(3) *Communism as positive overcoming of private property as human self-alienation*, and thus as the actual *appropriation of the human essence* through and for man; therefore as the complete and conscious restoration of man to himself within the total wealth of previous development, the restoration of man as a *social*, that is, human being. This communism as completed naturalism is humanism, as completed humanism it is naturalism. It is the *genuine* resolution of the antagonism between man and nature and between man and man; it is the true resolution of the conflict between existence and essence, objectification and self-affirmation, freedom and necessity, individual and species. It is the riddle of history solved and knows itself as this solution. (SWKM 1994, 71)

Commenting on this view of communism Peter Osborne pertinently says:

An adequate conception of communism, on the other hand, Marx claimed, will locate communism ‘within the entire wealth of the previous development’. That is to say, it will exclude nothing of what has been progressive in history up to
this time. It will take the productivity of capitalism as its condition. This is communism as ‘the positive suppression of private property as human self-estrangement and hence the actual appropriation of the human essence by and for human kind’. Only if private property is grasped in its most fundamental character as ‘human self-estrangement’, Marx is arguing, can its negation results in a genuine emancipation. (2005, 78)

According to Marx communism will solve the conflict between man and nature which suggests that communism is not going to be one of the stages in the historical development. Here Marx resembles Hegel who also believes in the end of history. That is why Marx considers communism as the final stage which solves the riddle of history.

To conclude, it can be asserted that the basic concepts of Marxian intellectual drives, like class and class struggle, means of production and their control, bourgeois and proletariat, base and superstructure, alienation and religion, socialism and communism are the basic search for a society beyond control and dominance. The basic tenets of Marxian philosophy extensively discussed in this chapter clearly indicate the basic premises of this study. It has already been humbly admitted that neither this chapter, nor the study, any way, is directly concerned with the entire or elegant Marxian philosophy. Only those aspects of Marxian thought are briefly discussed here which bear a relevance to the basic hypothetical and empirical concerns of the thesis. One can easily discern the difference and contextual distance between Phule and Marx. Nevertheless the discussions in this chapter clearly show the thrust of Marxian philosophy basically
aiming at expressing and dismantling the socio-economic and cultural structures that have always exploited and oppressed a noticeably large section of human society. Marxian critique of such exploitative institutions, including religion, has a stunning resemblance to Phule’s notions of human society beyond caste, color and religion. Economic considerations play an equally important role in shaping the movement of their conceptualization. Next chapter, therefore, takes up exploration of Phule and his conceptualization of cultural reconstruction.
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