

9.5 MARXIST PERSPECTIVE OF STATE

This theoretical approach is based on the concept of historical materialism. It is based on the ideology of Marx that has considered the institution of state as an institution of exploitation. The Marxist view on the institution of state may be summarized by way of the following points-

- (a) **State as a Class Institution:** This theory believes that state is a class institution. It is a product of class society. In each stage of human history the state is divided into two main classes the rich and the poor, where the rich exploits the poor. It is primarily because of this contradiction the human history moves on.
- (b) **State as a man-made Institution:** It is an artificial institution. It came into existence when it was in need in the slave owning society. When the exploitation of the slave owners crossed the limit, the slaves revolted against the masters and out of this struggle the slave owners created a number of institutions including the state to maintain control over the slaves.
- (c) **State belongs to the economically dominant class:** when the state came into existence it was the state of the master and the same continued in the feudal and capitalist states i.e. the state was dominated by the feudal lords and the capitalist class. It is in this way that the state belongs to the economically dominant class who have been exploiting the poor classes in the various stages of human history.
- (d) **State as a means:** Marxism believes that State is not an end in itself. In fact it is a means for securing the socio-economic development of a country. Marx gave the slogan "Workers of the world Unite". He wanted to lay the foundation of a state that would cater to the needs of the common people. However, it was only in the stage of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat (have-nots) that the nature of the state would be changed in the post-revolutionary period.
- (e) **State as a temporary and coercive institution:** Marxism regards state to be a temporary institution because once communism is established in the post-revolutionary period, the institution of the state

would gradually disappear. The Marxists also believed that power is connected with the existence of classes and that it is an instrument in the hands of ruling class, i.e. the basis of the state is force and not the will of the people. This reveals that the coercive dimension of the institution of the state.

➤ **Criticisms :**

Critics have put forward certain criticisms of the Marxist perspective of the state:

- (a) The critics have challenged the very premises of this approach towards the very understanding of the origin and the nature of the state.
- (b) The critics have also stated that it would be wrong to discard the Marxist approach totally but at the same time it cannot be said that the state always sides with the economically dominant classes and is based on force.
- (c) Finally, the critics state that the institution of State has a certain definite existence. To say that the institution of the state would disappear once communism is established is an utopian view.

Despite the limitations, the Marxist Approach has contributed towards the emergence of an economic institution of state having political relevance as well.