UNIT 6: CONTEMPORARY IDEOLOGIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Concept of Social Change

6.4 Contemporary Ideologies For Social Change

- 6.4.1 Neo- Liberalism
- 6.4.2 Globalization
- 6.4.3 Postmodernism
- 6.4.4 Feminism
- 6.4.5 Multiculturalism

6.5 Let Us Sum Up

6.6 Further Reading

6.7 Answers to check your progress

6.8 Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- Learn the different functions of social work
- Understand the concept of social change
- Discuss the contemporary ideologies for social change

6.2 INTRODUCTION

Social work is basically a helping process towards an individual or a group or a community or the whole society. With the changing social values and norms the problems are becoming more complex and affect large no of people. In this unit, let us discuss some of the important contemporary ideologies that infduence the Social Work practice.

Ideologies are the body of doctrines some philosophical bases, symbols etc associated with a particular social or political movement. In this unit we are going to discuss some of the ideologies for social change like Neo-Liberalism, Globalization and Postmodernism, Feminism, Multiculturalism.

6.3 CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

No human society is static and at the same time it is difficult to predict the forms and directions of social change. Any kind of change be does not fall under the purview of social change, rather it is only when certain significant change occurs that transforms the very foundations of anything or any structure, it can be considered as social change. The reason is that the factors which cause social change do not remain uniform always. The population changes expansion of science and technology, ideologies and social values take on new forms, and as a result of that social structure, social system and social institutions change their functioning. The process of industrialization and urbanization has changed the whole set of social relationships. It is quite visible that the contemporary world is not changing uniformly and is also manifesting complexities in social change. Slow and simple forms of social change may intersect with quick and intricate forms of social change. Migration of illiterate persons from remote control areas to metropolitan cities will effect the institutions of family life in it, add to stress and strain of daily living due to fast pace of city life and new social values required for industrial and urban living.

6.4 CONTEMPORARY IDEOLOGIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



Ideology is a collection of doctrines or beliefs shared by members of a group.

Ideology is a collection of doctrines or beliefs shared by members of a group. It can be described as a set of conscious and unconscious ideas which make up one's beliefs, goals, expectations and motivations. An ideology is a comprehensive normative vision that are followed by people, government, or other groups that is considered the correct way by the majority of population, as argued in several philosophical tendencies. It can

also be a set of ideas proposed by the dominant class of society such as the elite to all members of society as suggested in some Marxist and critical theory accounts while the concept of ideology describes a set of ideas broad in its normative reach, an ideology less encompassing than the ideas expressed in concepts such as worldview, imaginary and ontology. Ideology refers to the system of abstracted meaning applied to public matters, thus making this concept central to politics.

There are various causes of social change. From Max Weber's perspective: in essence, values, beliefs, and ideologies have a decisive impact on shaping social change. These factors have certainly broadly shaped directions of social change in modern world.

6. 4.1 Neo-Liberalism

Colonization of the southern countries by the Northern countries during the 18th and 20th centuries, led to collapse of civilisation ,genocide ,enslavement ,capture of resources ,and subservience of economies .The development plans of the ex-colonies followed the coloniser's liberal paradigm of economic development ,based on production and consumption of physical goods . Such a development became an instrument of the privileged class .The rural production system became a colonised base for the extraction of surplus for the urban-industrial economy. The new hierarchical dichotomy broadly assumed the form of "urban-organised" versus the "rural-unorganised" , the urban elite assuming the aura and the role of the imperialists. After falling of the Berlin Wall in 1989, it became more difficult henceforth to envisage alternatives to capitalism. Largely victims of debt trap, by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the ex-colonies were pressured to privatise, liberalise, and globalise as an extension of the development project. Globalisation is the natural outcome of the neo-liberalist ideology, which promotes minimum government interference and considers market as the sole social regulator.

Neo -liberalism is modern colonialism, which won its great victories , not so much through its military and technological prowess ,as through its ability to create secular hierarchies. The appeal of neo-liberalism is usually

based on the idea that implies less red tape, less centralisation and less bureaucratic control. However, the shift is from the rule of the nation -state to that of the global corporations are more powerful than governments and also because they are less accountable than governments to democratic control (Shiva,1997).

A Manifesto of People's Global Action was prepared at a meeting of people's movements from all continents, in Geneva in 1998. According to this manifesto, the transnational corporations (TNCs) are taking over national enterprises, which most typically results in the destruction of jobs and dispossession of the workers of their ability to bargain with the capitalists in a national context. The manifesto further observes that for decades, the institutions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and now the World Trade Organisations (WTO), in alliance with national governments and corporate powers, have facilitated manoeuvrings to appropriate the environment.

Appropriations of environment has taken place as humans are considered above and outside of nature, as the source of all values, and nature is ascribed only an instrumental value (Capra,1996). Biodiversity, land and water are the three vital resources that the majority of our people depend on for their livelihood and survival. **'Intellectual property rights** are emerging as an important mechanism for taking away the living resources and bio diversity from the people and converting them into corporate monopolies. The result is environmental devastation tragic and unmanageable social displacement and the wiping out of cultural and biological diversity. Mass media and corporate consumerist culture are the main agents of commodification and homogenisation of cultural diversity. The domination of western science and technology has swept away very diverse and valuable knowledge systems and technologies based on centuries of experience. Despite their many failures, capital-intensive technologies are systematically treated as superior to traditional labour-intensive technologies. This ideological discrimination results in unemployment and indebtedness. While the number of billionaires grows, more and more people around the world find themselves in a system that



Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) are mechanisms for taking away the living resources and biodiversity from people and converting them into corporate monopolies.

offers them no place in production and no access to consumption, even to meet their basic needs (People's Global Action,1998). Several ideologies have immerged to counter neo liberalism, as discussed below.

6. 4. 2 Globalization

Liberalization and Globalization have come into being in specific historic circumstances. Globalization can be seen as a process of social change that has brought distant and different parts of the world into inter-relation with one another. It started off as an economic change but now cuts across different spheres.

Globalization stands for greater integration of national economies into a world economy in which the market predominates. It is an expansion of economic activities across the political boundaries of nation states. Three related aspects of economic openness constitute the most important dimensions of globalization. These are openness to international trade, international investment and international finance in a world integrates more tightly through improvements in communication technology.

The economic dimension is evident most clearly in the 'global market place' which comprises the production as well as distribution of goods on a global scale. Much of the consumer goods that we purchases have originated in the 'global production system', as it is sometimes referred to. Production becomes globalized in that different components of a product are manufactured in different countries or places, and later assembled together. Multinational companies have branches all over the world to produce different parts with the cheapest material and labour costs. They have supply chains and marketing networks to sell them all over the world.

Globalization refers to the process of integration which is intensifying world wide social relations and interdependences among nations and people for creation of a global society .This is a result of adoption of economic liberalization and market oriented models of economy and also due to the developments in communications and transport . It has brought societies and communities into a sphere of interactivity through trade and commerce, movement of people and delocalization of production .There is also a growth

of global institutions like World Bank, Multinational Corporation or Trans National Corporation. There is exchange of cultures, ideas and systems of knowledge between various parts of the world like never before.

It transcends political boundaries and calls for moving beyond nation states tom transnational governance in which international governmental organization dominate. Globalization can be thought of as the relaxation of the authority of the state in favour of the market. Globalization erodes the dominance of the institution of state. The state can no longer decide its economic priorities all by itself because it operates in context of an integrated global market where other nations are also participating .Globalisation also entails the coming together of the states for efficient management of resources and their development. This means a loss of power of the state and rise in power of other institution like market, financial organisations and non-governmental organisations.

Globalization is leading to homogenization of cultures and rise in consumption of global goods across cultures. Globalization has become a thorny issue which has polarised opinions into staunch support as comprehensive denunciations. There are also those who view Globalization as offering a variety of opportunities to all but with the risk of marginalizing those who cannot benefit from it. David Held (1999) has summarised these views in three district categories **'hyperglobalisers' (pro globalisations), 'sceptics' (traditionalist) and 'transformationlist'(middle path).**

The hyperglobalisers see globalization as a very real phenomenon that is of benefit to all. They increasing trade and commerce between countries will prosperity to all. The sceptics doubt potential of globalization in removing poverty and making all nations and peoples prosperous. According to them ,the globalised economy is controlled by the USA and Europe ,not equally by all nations . Globalisation is buzzword used by corporate capitalists of the first world to monopolise global business and subordinate poor nations in a neo colonial structure. Pursuing a middle path, transformationalists perceive globalisation as having the power to transform the realms of economy , polity society and culture and individual lives by setting up a new world order , but also a risk of marginalising some sections

in the process.

Korten (1999) has listed the following components of the vision of globalisation.

i. The world's money, technology and markets are controlled and managed by gigantic global corporations
ii. A common consumer culture unifies all people in a shared quest for material gratification
iii. Corporations are free to act solely on the basis of profitability, without regard to national or local consequences.
iv. Relationships, both, individual and corporate, are defined entirely by the market.
v. There are no loyalties to place and community.

The global economy starts to produce products where costs are lowest , sell them where markets are more lucrative , and shift the resulting profits to where tax rates are least burdensome. This weakens the bargaining power of any given locality and shifts the balance of power from the local human interest to the global corporate interest.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Write the meaning of 'ideology'.

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Q 2: What is 'globalisation'?

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6.4.3 Postmodernism

Postmodernists describe modern ideals of science, justice, and art, ideals carrying with them specific political agenda and ultimately unable to

legitimise themselves as universals. The claim is that the pursuit of such theories itself rests upon the modernist conception of an inspiring reason, a reason able to separate itself from the body and from historical time and place. Thus postmodernists recognise the highest ideals of modernity in the West as immanent to a specific historical time and geographical region and also associated with certain political baggage. Such a baggage includes notions of the supremacy of the West, of the legitimacy of science to tell us how to use our bodies, and of the distinction between art and mass culture.

Postmodernism challenges the modern, global, all-encompassing world views, be they political, religious or social, as meta-narratives that anticipate all questions and provide predetermined answers. Postmodernists, thus, reject attempts to apply the model of natural science inquiry in the social sciences. They critique totality, reason and universality and claim that in the name of "science", authority has been exercised in a variety of ways: in the disciplines, the media, popular advice manuals, and so on. Postmodernism is a discourse of popularity, difference and multinarratives. The postmodern reaction to modern ethical theories recommends that moral thinkers should turn their attention away from the problematic to the people as a whole. People's goodness ha to do, not with virtues, but with their integrated wholeness (Agarwal,1998). Postmodernists replace efforts at impartial observation with confidence in emotion, and prefer relativism to objectivity.

Postmodernism provides forms of historical knowledge as a way of reclaiming power and identity for subordinate groups. The ideology of postmodernism has brought about visibility to important ideology and structural forces such as race, gender and class by acknowledging the question of power and value in the construction of knowledge and subjectivities. It has raised questions regarding how culture inscribed in the production of centre/margin hierarchies and the reproduction of post-colonial forms of subjugation. The postmodernist thinking has led to a multidimensional understanding of social stratification, based on race, gender, education, and occupation, and not merely on class.

Earlier, property relations obscured ethnic ones, but now is property

that begins to seem derivative and ethnicity that seems to become a more fundamental source of stratification. Society has generally hierarchically ordered the ethnic groups, with typically a dominant or superordinate group and a subordinate group. Cultural explanations of ethnic inequality impute "desirable characteristics to the dominant groups such as ethnic purity and "undesirable" characteristics to the subordinate group to rationalise the hierarchy. Racism and the Indian caste system are clear examples of social stratification based on ethnicity and culture that has led to economic inequality. The tribals are imputed a low status also because of their cultural "backwardness" with reference to "development".

6.4.4 Feminism

During the 19th century, the liberalist ideology led to the emergence of liberal feminism ,the first school of **feminism thought**. The second wave feminism is dated from 1969 onwards. The United Nations Declaration of 1974 as the International Women's Year and 1976-86 as the International Decade for Women had led to a worldwide feminist movement.



Feminism argues that the gender system subordinates women in patriarchal relations that exist over and above class relations.

Feminists differentiate between sex as a biological division between men and women and gender as the socially unequal division into femininity and masculinity. Gender has for long been treated as purely a "secondary force" in history. The presumption was that modern society is essentiality a class system. The nuclear family was seen as the elemental unit of stratification, with the occupation or employment status of the family 'head'(that is husband)defining the class position of all its members. Feminism argues that the gender system subordinates women in patriarchal relations that exist over and above class relations, since male dominance over women's productive and reproductive roles predates the emergence of capitalism.

There are different school of feminist thinking that have historically emerged. Liberal feminism is the oldest school, which emphasised the similarities of women with men and therefore, demanded legal reforms and equal opportunities for suffrage, education, and employment. It achieved significant changes in these areas over a period of time. This school of

thought dominates state polices in different countries even today. However ,liberal feminists do not analyse the gender roots of gender opposition in society.

Marxist feminists view women's oppression as the outgrowth of the capitalists mode of production , which resulted in the spatial divide between domestic work and wage work and labelled them as non productive and productive , respectively. Radical feminists identified the concern for patriarchal control over women's sexuality and reproduction . issues of work and labour are seen by them as secondary. It is they who conceptualised patriarchy as a system of gender oppression. Socialist feminists attempt to synthesise Marxist thought with that of radical feminism, using the comprehensive tool of patriarchy as the system that controls women's labour, sexuality and reproduction.

Born out of women's experience of powerlessness, feminist ideologies today seek to understand the nature power as it operates in women's lives. They attempt to explain not just the origin of gender subordination, but also the tenacity of such normative values in a changing socioeconomic scenario. These explanations go beyond sexism, to provide different perspectives on all kinds of social inclusion, including racism and casteism . The underlying continuation is that the perceived disparities between the sexes is the earliest known form of social differentiation, it provides the script for the development of other known forms of oppressive practices. Eco-feminists see the patriarchal domination and exploitation of women as the prototype of all domination and exploitation, including exploitation of nature. Accordingly eco feminists see female experiential knowledge as a major source for an ecological vision of reality.

6.4.5 Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism brings together issues that refers to the need for community, a sense of belonging to it ,the importance of a secure sense of identity ,of status and recognition , of particularity and the need to recognise and maintain difference with others. There is an inherent tendency in, both, the liberal democratic state and the global market economy to run down

pluralism. Ends of both are severed through homogenisation of citizen responses and social tastes. In India, the homogenisation is being defined and determined in terms of fictional majoritarian conceptions and values of Hinduism.

Multiculturalism is a move away from modern ideology, which concerned itself with freedom, equality and justice, given a pronounced individualist colouring. The framework of material welfare and a culturally-neutral universalism underline the importance of individual choice, the compulsion of a more equitable distribution of material resources and the need to belong to a wider social and political universe, where neither one's class or status nor cultural inheritance was a source of advantage or disadvantage. Here, the dominant cultures generate stereotypes of the dominated which they get their victims to accept and that results in the loss of confidence and pervasive self image of inferiority. People then lose respect for their own cultures and hasten the progress of homogenisation, induced by dominant cultures.



Multiculturalism is concerned with freedom, equality and justice, given a pronounced individualist colourring.

Both sameness and difference can be source of inequality and injustice. We must neither be discriminated on account of particular features of religion and culture nor as a condition of citizenship, be compelled to set inside our cultural particularity. A demand to renounce cultural identity as a condition for free and equal citizenship no longer appears to be viable. Recent demands for a multicultural society constitute a plea for egalitarian multiculturalism. Egalitarian multiculturalist enquires recognition or respect for culture ,which in turn possible only after a degree of interaction, familiarity and mutual understanding. Communal politics thrive on false stereotypes, which constrain rather than help intercultural understanding.

Democracy needs a common identity for people to be sovereign, a new self understanding among individuals as collective agents, who are more than a mere disparate set of individuals, must come into existence. Unless this happens little reason exists for people to accept the decisions of the majority. The unity required for collective agency is achieved by culture or ethnicity. The very requirement of collective agency key to the democratic vision, simultaneously generate ethnic or cultural nationalism

.The democratic age itself posses new obstacles to coexistence which was possible to achieve within an undemocratic political structure.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Who are Marxist feminists?

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Q 4: Describe Multiculturalism.

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6.5 LET US SUM UP

- Ideologies are the body of doctrines some philosophical bases, symbols etc associated with a particular social or political movement.
- Any kind of change be does not fall under the purview of social change, rather it is only when certain significant change occurs that transforms the very foundations of anything or any structure, it can be considered as social change.
- The new hierarchical dichotomy broadly assumed the form of "urban-organised" versus the "rural-unorganised" , the urban elite assuming the aura and the role of the imperialists.
- Postmodernism challenges the modern, global, all-encompassing world views, be they political, religious or social.
- Feminism argues that the gender system subordinates women in patriarchal relations that exist over and above class relations, since male dominance over women's productive and reproductive roles predates the emergence of capitalism.



6.6 FURTHER READING

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6.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

Answer 1. An ideology is a comprehensive normative vision that are followed by people, government, or other groups that is considered the correct way by the majority of population, as argued in several philosophical tendencies.

Answer 2. Globalization stands for greater integration of national economies into a world economy in which the market predominates. It is an expansion of economic activities across the political boundaries of nation states. Three related aspects of economic openness constitute the most important dimensions of globalization. These are openness to international trade, international investment and international finance in a world integrates more tightly through improvements in communication technology.

Answers 3. Marxist feminists view women's oppression as the outgrowth of the capitalists mode of production , which resulted in the spatial divide between domestic work and wage work and labelled them as non productive and productive , respectively.

Answer 4. Multiculturalism brings together issues that refers to the need for community, a sense of belonging to it ,the importance of a secure sense of identity ,of status and recognition , of particularity and the need to recognise and maintain difference with others.



6.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q.1: What are the different functions of social work?

Q.2: Define social change?

Q.3: What in Neo Liberalism?

Q.4: Discuss the impact of Neo liberalism on social change?

Q.5: Define globalization and its relevance towards social change.

Q.6: Write about post modernism and its impact on social change?

Q.7: What is Feminism?

Q.8: What are consequences of Feminism?

Q.9: Discuss multiculturalism as a factor of social change?