UNIT 9 : PERSPECTIVES OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN INDIA

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9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able:

- Describe the role of Gandhi, Tilak, Ambedkar in shaping social work philosophy
- acquire knowledge on the resistance movements of subalterns and influence of postmodernism in social work practice;
- discuss Marxian, feminist and post modern influence on social work.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

Tracing the history of emergence of social work as an activity first, and then as a profession has been influenced by various ideologies and perspectives of influential social reformers. Social work as a profession is highly value-laden. The emergence of many new ethical issues resulting from technological and scientific advancements, suggest a need for greater attention to values and ethics

9.3 IDEOLOGICAL INFLUENCES OF SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENTS

The society in India was divided into different castes and still is. The people belonging to upper castes enjoyed special rights. The people of lower castes were treated as untouchables. They were not allowed to enter into the houses of the people of the upper castes. They were made to work for the benefits of the higher caste people. Not only this, many atrocities were hurled upon them. They were sometimes mercilessly beaten if they broke those norms which were set for them. The position of women in the Indian society was also grim. They were deprived of their rights. Widow remarriage was not allowed in Hindu society. Child marriages were encouraged at that time in India Sati system was another social evil prevalent in the Indian society We can say that Indian society was superstitious and backward in every sphere of life. Some movements were launched to reform the traditional Indian society. Social reform movements have played a dynamic role and impacted the making of modern India. They brought about ideological influences in the political as well as social scenario of India. The gradual shift from liberating women could be seen. Social evils such as *Sati* and female foeticide were abolished to a great extent. The reform movements represented the striving of the conscious and progressive sections of the Indian people to democratize social institutions and remodel old religious outlooks to suit the new social needs. Movements strived towards abolition of caste system, equal rights for woman, a campaign

against child marriage, Sati system, against the ban on widow remarriage and against social and legal inequalities. These movements in varying degrees, tried to awaken and educate the masses against these social evils. Some of the reform movements like the Brahmo Samaj, the Prathana Samaj and Arya Samaj made an attempt to remove evils from the Indian society and tried to bridge the gulf between modern European rationalism and the traditional life and institutions of Indian people.

9.3.1 Advent of Missionaries in India :

Before the advent of the missionaries in India, the *pathshalas* or village schools provided basic education to the students. There were hardly any missionaries- European or Protestants who were involved in education process in India prior to 1793.

William Carey came to India in 1973 and in 1974 he set up his first school as he believed that schools were one of the most effectual means of spreading the 'light of the gospel' through the world. Carey was relocated to Serampore in 1800 where he became part of the **Serampore Trio** aim of which was to create a group of preachers in India who would be from among the natives. To achieve this, they decided on three objectives- i. to translate the Scriptures into native languages, ii. to preach and iii. to set up educational institutions to coach Christian Indians so that they could ultimately become missionaries.

The Missionaries had deep impact on the local culture. The Missionaries strategies were changed as they got feedback while achieving their goals. The missionaries also arranged with Government but both of them had different educational strategies and aims. The Missionary education was more secular than the education under Government in the context of Alexander Duff's strategy. There was a clear difference between the education at the town level through English medium of instruction and the attempt to impart knowledge at village level through local languages. The paper also focuses on missionaries aims and how they were successful at village level. The missionary's major aim was to develop local agencies in institutions. Due to many reasons this aim was diverted but ultimately

became the strongest aim and strategy as it was highly commended by World Missionary Conference.

In which direction there was a missionary ideas about the philosophy of education; the Baptist agency started work with main interest in the education. In the mid of Nineteenth century missionary education had become part of a more general provision of education for India but without any focused aim. The greatest difference between the Government and the Missionary education was in case of higher schools. English was the medium of instruction and at primary schools vernacular language was medium of instruction. Some missions established a complete English system of education. It is clear that the missionary acted within in a peculiar context and a specific mould of thinking and approach. To some extent, the missionary's ideas and thoughts also followed the ideologies and practice of the Indians. The Government saw the issue of missionary education specifically and it was an important theme as intergral element of "ideologies of the Raj."

The main aim of the missionaries was conversion and large resources were spent on the education but these were not sufficient for this vast purpose. In India, Alexander Duff's work was successful but not for all missionaries. Duff was a Scottish missionary and popular because of his excellence in his education. Through his ability and contacts conversions into Christianity became possible. Duff's work was different and consistent as compared to his fellow missionaries. It was considered a positive success. The missionaries got the support of the elite classes, and the Indian leaders had been won for the church. A century later, William Miller's educational policy was expounded in the Edinburgh conference in 1910. Doubts were raised because of he demanded of the Indian church was increased.

The English model missionary which was powerfully undermined by the Scottish, was restarted to take over again. Education at primary level for the lower classes was conducted in local languages. The local teachers were also working as preachers as well. Churches had been established and schools and colleges for the purpose of training the native agency was

a necessity. The missionaries if, could remained unsuccessful to continue their work, but local Christians continued their work. The Serampore College and Bishop Colleges were working according to the above justification. The enterprise of local Church and working of the local agency took some time to establish. The policy of diffusion failed in building Christening presence in India which was the missionaries aim and Duff's aim because Duff's educational plans included a strong element of cultural imperialism. According to Duff, the western culture would brace itself to the Indians that they would with their own ease give up their view in the favor and present of western culture. Practically a few Indians accepted that change. A few accepted westernization and they became skeptical of their own Hindu religious culture, a few became anglicized in some of their traditions but they did not completely become Christians. Furthermore Duff's disciples were mostly favored high class missionaries. With the help of missionaries, Duff felt that change was necessary for the conversion of their students. High caste classes have the advantages of educational opportunities but they can do without entering into Christianity, it was specific class which condemned the lower castes and teaching high equality in social relationship. If compared, the church and school in the rural areas offered better path out of social complexes and financial exploitation.



The aims and objectives of Missionary Education in the Colonial Era in India high class was associated with Christianity for example; St Stephen's college existed in Delhi, Madras Christian College in Madras.

The aims and objectives of Missionary Education in the Colonial Era in India high class was associated with Christianity for example; St Stephen's college existed in Delhi, Madras Christian College in Madras. The fact is that the lower class being the forces of missionary strategy, local language was more attractive a tool and that contributed most to the building of the Indian church. The early aims of missionaries were associated with Duff. After Wood Dispatch 1854, more diverse interpretation followed. In the 19th century, real aims of Christian education came out and all agreed with them on themes such as conversions, trainings (Christian leaders), the distribution of Christian knowledge. Preferences were within these objectives were elaborately discussed. The Edinburgh Report tried to balance the discussions. But the last paragraph favored the training of church leaders. A conversion was not completely successful in the higher institutions. The

Lindsay Commission found that Christian colleges basically should be used to fill the gap between educated Christians and the uneducated living in villages.

Thus, here we see how the advent of the missionaries in India brought about quite a structural change in the society and it influenced the mindsets of all classes of the society to a great extent.

9.3.2 Gandhian Thoughts

Gandhi believed in peace processes in the pursuit of social justice and in service to others. Gandhi's perspective on social activism is highly relevant to social work ethics and is a resource for its ethical enrichment. Principles such as individual self development, service to others, non-violent social action and material simplicity could enhance the current National Association of Social Worker's (NASW) Code of Ethics.

Gandhian ethical system is inimical to western materialistic values and utilitarianism. He emphasizes social justice and well-being of all (Sarvodaya), giving priority to the disadvantaged sections and the poorest of the poor (Antyodaya). Gandhi meant by Sarvodaya, the raise or awakening of all. Gandhi is more relevant today than even before. The ethical values which he cherished are universal in the sense that they are in conformity with the universal norms and particularly more relevant to the values and ethics of social work practice. Some people believe that he is two hundred years ahead of his time. He has launched his movement for the reconstruction of the society and for bettering human conditions far ahead of times and sowed the seeds of his thought for human betterment for the modern world which is facing challenges to human survival. We have to choose between Atom and Ahimsa, between non-violence and nonexistence between Sarvodaya and Sarvanasha (total annihilation). In view of the fact that humanity is facing serious threat to its key existence, there is growing awareness all over the world that Gandhi's work and teachings and his ideas have greater relevance. To quote Dr.Nelson Mandela, "Gandhi holds the key to human progress". Gandhi made significant contribution to the world by his revolutionary ideas and concepts such as Satyagraha (truthful

force), Sarvodaya (welfare of all), Shantisena (peace brigade). He has also developed other key concepts such as trust, non-violence (Ahimsa), ends and means, non-possession, trusteeship, vows, lifestyle, constructive work, basic education, Swaeshi and Gram Swaraj.

All these ideas and concepts have been gaining currency with the passage of time. Vinoba believed that sarvodaya is based on the three fold programmes would revolutionize the life of man and build a new world in which there is equality, nondiscrimination, non-exploitation, poverty alleviation and ultimately leading to non-violence and peaceful co-existence. The constructive programmes developed by Gandhi resulted in enlightened activities and reforms. Following Mahatma Gandhi, Vinobha under his stewardship launched Bhoodan (land gift), Gramdan (village gift) in 1951. The movement assumed new dimension under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan with his declaration of Jeevandan (life gift) which means dedication of one's whole life and energy to the cause of the movement .

9.3.3 Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Bal Gangadhar Tilak played a significant role in the making of modern India. He was a renowned Sanskrit scholar and an astronomer. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was an independence activist who was also a journalist, teacher, social reformer and lawyer. He was born on July 23, 1856, and died on August 1 in the year 1920. He is better known for the quote "Swarajya is my birthright and I shall have it!" Tilak argued that for the welfare of the society and Lokasamgraha (universal benefit) every individual should follow his Dharm. Dharma meant the duty allotted to a person by the social arrangement. Lokamanya was of the view that dharma was necessary for the maintenance of society. To quote him, "when this dharma ceases to be observed, the binding ropes are loosened, society will be in the same position as the planetary system". The highest ideal for Tilak was the release of the soul (moksa). He argued, "Atmic benefit or metaphysical perfection is the first and the highest duty of everyman." He further said, "although we accept maintenance of society as being the chief outward use of dharma, yet we

never lose sight of the Redemption of the Atman (atmankkalya) or Release (moksa) which is the highest ideal according to the Vedic or all other religions and which is the special feature of our view-point.

Tilak further said that every individual played an important role in the society. He argued, "Just as extremely small wheels are necessary along with large wheels in order that any machine should work properly, so also is it necessary that the authority of common-place persons should be exercised properly and fully in the same way as the authority of superior persons like Vyasa and others, in order that the immense and ponderous activity or mechanism of the cosmos should continue to work in a properly regulated manner."-' Here Tilak argued that persons from all walks of life were needed to run the society. Each and every person was important. Because everybodj' had a role to play in the society irrespective of his status, caste or creed. He tried to harmonise the interest of individual with the interest of society by the principle of self-identification. He argued, "This easy principle of 'self-identification,(atmaupamya) which regulates the mutual behaviour of persons living in a society, is so comprehensive, so easy to understand, and so universally accepted, that when once one lays down the rule: 'Realise the identity of the Atma in all created beings, and behave towards others with an equable frame of mind, as if they are yourself, it is no more necessary to lay down such individual commandments as: be kind to others; help others as much as possible; bring about their welfare; put them on the path of advancement; love them; do not get tired of them; do not hurt their feelings; behave towards them with justice and equality; do not deceive any one; do not deprive any one of his wealth or of his life; do not tell anyone an untruth; bear always in mind the idea of bringing about the greatest good of the greatest number; behave towards all, looking upon them as the children of one and the same father, and as if they were your brothers etc. Tilak's principle of self-identification if followed can go a long way in bringing about harmony in society.

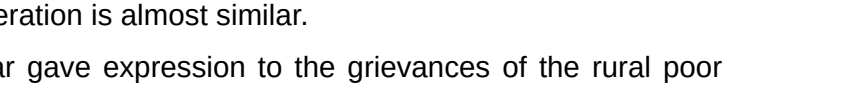
9.3.4 Ambedkar's Perspectice :

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar wrote extensively on the roots of the caste system, Hinduism per se, the ill effects of the caste order, the minority question, the vision of a caste-free society, the gender question, contemporary politics and vision of India. Ambedkar came out with a critique in his book 'Annihilation of Castes' (1936), pointing out that what was implicit in the caste system was not merely division of labour but also a division of labours. Dr. Ambedkar's attack on the caste system was not merely aimed at challenging the hegemony of the upper castes but had broader connotation of economic growth and development. He argued that the caste system had reduced the mobility of labour and capital which in turn, impeded economic growth and development in India. Dr. Ambedkar called for people and institutions to have an action on the social cause. In Ambedkar's world and work, 'Dalit movement' was only a launch pad for a larger reform movement strongly grounded in humanism, human rights and western values.

Dr. Ambedkar succeeded in establishing the untouchables as scheduled castes and as a politically relevant category both to themselves and to others, thus bringing the untouchables from invisibility to visibility, from silence to articulated protest. By the early twentieth century, armed with his intellectual sophistry and personal sense of pain, Ambedkar became the most formidable critic and opponent of the caste order on India's national scene, articulating the demands of the untouchables and carrying the message of their agony to the highest bearers of power. Ambedkar tried to endow the lower castes with a glorious history of sons of the soil to help them acquire an alternative - not-caste based - identity, to regain their self respect and overcome their divisions. 'Dalit' has become understood today as embodying the sense of being oppressed and therefore, the need to revolt against oppression. The political usage of the term is inclusive of all who are "broken and oppressed" viz., SCs and STs, neo-Buddhists, workers, peasants, landless labourers, women and religious minorities who are oppressed by caste and exploited economically. The comparison between the oppressed groups is natural despite different historical situations because

the process of liberation is almost similar.

Dr. Ambedkar gave expression to the grievances of the rural poor through mass movements. His successful struggle against the prevailing land tenure system called "kothi" liberated a vast majority of the rural poor from an extreme form of economic exploitation. Land is a way to social justice, in a society which was segregated on hierarchical values and where women were not even considered as equal human being. Hence it was important to take the land beyond just welfare-ism or from those who use it for their own agenda where people are no more the decision makers but surrender their decisions to a few 'learned people' or 'revolutionaries'. Land plays a diabolical role in the life of rural people. Being the main source of subsistence, land is metamorphosed in to socio-economic reality. He highlighted the issue of land and advocated for Co-operative agriculture. Dr. Ambedkar also raised the women's issue as Member of Legislative Council during his debate in Bombay Legislative Assembly on 10th Nov. 1938; he strongly advocated family planning measures and said that besides many other problems giving birth to, too many children negatively affects Mother's health. Later in the year 1942, He also introduced Maternity Benefit Bill during his tenure as Labour Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. From 1942 to 1946, Dr. Ambedkar was instrumental in bringing about several labour reforms including establishment of employment exchanges, generally laying the foundations of industrial relations in Independent India. His ministry also included irrigation, power and other public works. He played an important role in shaping the irrigation policies especially the Damodar Valley Project. Thus Ambedkar's perspectives are very crucial for the profession of social work.



Land is a way to social justice, in a society which was segregated on hierarchical values and where women were not even considered as equal human being.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Who was Alexander Duff?

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Q 2: Who introduced the Maternity Benefit Bill?

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9.4 MARXIST PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL WORK

Marxist understandings of society 'Marxism is many things in a state of flux and development is subject to highly divergent interpretations. Marxism is not simply a theory: it is a political practice which confronts capitalism with an alternative model of a social order'. Marxism is thus unfinished, containing theory and practice in a dialectical unity, 'praxis' Marxism presents a systemic view that can help social workers relate the personal to the social in order to address the root causes of people's problems, an aim shared by some feminist and anti-racist approaches. Dialectical Materialism, the Marxist analytic method, dialectical materialism, involves an iterative movement from holistic and concrete living phenomena to a 'number of determinant, abstract, general relations' and from there back to a more complex understanding of the living whole. Marxism focuses on the shaping of consciousness by experience, shaped in turn by the way society is organized, with its most basic roots in processes of production and reproduction. Marxism's central premises are that people must produce to survive, that the satisfaction of needs leads to further needs, that people reproduce not only themselves but their species, and that all of this activity is organized socially, depending on the means of production available.

Dialectical materialism states that history is determined by not only the economic class struggle, but also 'the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic - in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out' with ideas impacting back on the future development of the material basis of society.

Under capitalism, social work can help facilitate social change, through political education, building alliances between oppressed groups, and helping people to cope with the alienation and exploitation caused by capitalism while they struggle to change oppressive structures. Under

socialism, a radical shift in approach is needed for social work to retain its relevance, as Radical Social Work's goals of organising society to meet human needs are pursued by a socialist state and political and mass organisations tailored/ formed for that purpose. Approaches to social work and welfare in countries where Marxist-led revolutions have attempted to build socialism offer a rich source of experience, but are under-documented in English. Recent steps toward broadening what constitutes social work, through the concept of 'popular social work', represent a step forward in comparing social work approaches under such radically different contexts as capitalist states, states that are breaking down or fundamentally contested, and socialist states.

9.5 FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

The history of the feminist movement in the United States is often split into "three waves", which can help represent different theoretical perspectives. The first wave started with the women's suffrage movement in the late 1800s. During this time, attention was paid to issues such as child labor, prostitution, and safety in order to improve the lives of poor urban women. The liberal feminist perspective, which focused on political and legal actions, was a common theoretical perspective during this wave. The second wave of the feminist movement is associated with the 1960s and 1970s alongside the civil rights and anti-war movements and is viewed as more radical than the first wave. By the end of the 1960s, the radical feminist perspective started to have a larger role in Social Workers' Feminist Perspectives: Implications for Practice 2 the feminist movement, often in conflict with the liberal feminist perspective. However, while this wave is often associated with the radical feminist perspective, the liberal feminist perspective was still present during this wave. Additionally, near the end of this second wave, in the mid-1970s, the socialist feminist perspective and women of color/womanist feminist perspective started to emerge, creating even more divisions among feminist professionals. During the second wave

the focus was on changing patriarchal institutions within the United States. The main issues during this time period were creating equal rights for women in the constitution through the Equal Rights Amendments, and issues concerned with reproductive rights, sexuality and domestic violence.

The third wave of feminism began in the mid-1990s, when women of color and women who identified as a part of the GLBT (Gay-Lesbian-Bi sexual- Transgender) population questioned the "universalist assumptions about 'women' represented in the "white" feminist perspective during the second wave of feminism. Third-wave feminism aimed to eliminate the idea of "us vs. them" by allowing women to choose who they wanted to be. Second wave radical feminists viewed lipstick, high heels and low-cut shirts as anti-feminist, while third-wave feminists embraced these as signs of femininity. While this third wave continued to focus on unequal power dynamics in our society, it also embraced differences among women. This wave is centered around the idea that not all women want the same thing and third wave feminists encouraged women to make decisions based on their own desires and not on their gender. Issues such as family friendly work policies and rights for individuals who identify as GLBT were also introduced during this wave.



Throughout these three waves, social work has not always taken an active role in feminism. Simons (1988) argued that the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) was slow to respond to the challenges put forth by liberal, radical and socialist feminists.

Throughout these three waves, social work has not always taken an active role in feminism. Simons (1988) argued that the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) was slow to respond to the challenges put forth by liberal, radical and socialist feminists.In the 1960s and early 1970s, while feminist organizations were fighting to change policies, the profession of social work was doing little to support this movement. The NASW did show some signs of feminist engagement during the 1973 Delegate Assembly of the National Association of Social Workers, where there was a resolution to target at risk populations, including women. Feminism in social work gained momentum once more in the late 1980s and many individuals have been trying to keep the feminist voice active in social work ever since.

9.6 SUBALTERN PERSPECTIVES

Subaltern studies emerged in the early 1980s when there was growing criticism against the Marxist practice. The term 'subaltern' means 'of inferior rank' refers to people or groups in the society who are facing oppression by the ruling classes. This term was introduced by Antonio Gramsi an Italian Marxist and Communist Party Leader to refer to the poor, downtrodden people, someone who is neglected and treated differently. They mostly belong to low ranking in the social and political hierarchy. Subaltern perspective seeks to understand the different aspects of an individual's conflict with the society and conflict with other ideology or behaviour.

The subaltern perspective can be depicted through the caste, race, occupation, class, age, colour, and many more factors. It usually means subordination in any field, and it embodies features of dominance and submissive behaviours. People's resistance to the domination of the elites is the core of subaltern politics and appreciating people's consciousness and their action is the chief concern of subaltern studies.

9.6. 1 Dalit Subaltern

In India, the term Dalit subaltern was constructed by the Hindu society to refer to the Dalits considered as its 'Other' who were socially excluded and treated as untouchables. They were denied any representation and treated as mere objects. Their subaltern struggle is against caste and feudal hierarchies and not the class based approach of Marxist's ideology. Caste and not class is ideally responsible for the marginalization and exploitation of the Dalits in India. This is where the Dalits differed from other subaltern groups that stood for class subordination and they felt they were known by this distinct identity.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar stood up for this ideology rejecting the class based belief and joined the Dalit's struggle for democratic rights. He called for annihilation of caste that had oppressed the Dalits for centuries and this request was highlighted even before India's Independence. Caste regulations in India were enforced by the Brahmins using the religiously and culturally

sanctioned domination and silenced the dissenting Dalit voices through the help of the monarchy. They were deprived of basic privileges which were entitled to the higher caste groups. Hegemony of a particular social class occurs either through domination or through intellectual and moral leadership. Dr. Ambedkar was the first member of this marginalised group to go abroad for higher education and when he returned he came up with recommendations for the upliftment of the oppressed classes to enable them get equal opportunities to study and develop. He proposed the idea of reservation to provide for equal opportunities and rights as enshrined in the Constitution.

Dr.Ranajit Guha, a historian contributed a lot towards subaltern studies where history of the subaltern was written from subaltern perspectives. Dr.Shahid Amin and Dr.Sumit Sarkar also have contributed through their writings related to subaltern perspectives from different regions of the country which has a significant impact.

9.6.2 Adivasi Subaltern

Perspectives related to Adivasi subaltern was documented by David Hardiman, through his study, 'The Coming of Devi'. This is about a movement of assertion led by the Adivasisto change their lifestyle,called the 'Devi Movement' in South Gujarat that took place in the early 20th century. It was taken up against the liquor dealers who were monopolising and exploiting the tribals. The tribals spread over a large area, led a peaceful protest to bring about social reform amongst them. Surprisingly, this movement was not covered by the newspapers and even the government did not take notice of it. Hardiman observed that the tribals were denied any initiative or decision making capacity to choose what is good for them by the so called socialists who were mere observers.

The Devi movement started as a small ceremony in 1921 among the fisher folk of Palghar taluk which spread slowly to other parts of Gujarat. The movement was aimed at reforming themselves, coming out of alcohol addiction and also as a rebellion against the Parsi liquor landlords and vendors who had subjected them to huge debts and bondage. A girl was

dressed up as 'The Devi', came down from the mountains and expressed her demands through the medium of spirit. The medium sat before the crowd, holding red clothes in their hand and shaking their head. After the demands were expressed, gifts and money was offered to the Devi. The crowd had a common dinner. The demands made by Devi brought about a collective consciousness among the Adivasis towards political mobilization and also to improve their standard and quality of life and free themselves from the clutches of the Parsis and Shahukars. They decided to refrain from drinking and lead a disciplined life and have nothing to do with the moneylenders and liquor vendors. Hardiman states that though this rebellion did not aid in total emancipation or empowerment of the Adivasis, but resulted in the tribals becoming assertive, taking up self-help and working for the collective welfare of their community.

Ranajit Guha states that people participate in any kind of revolt only when their requests and pleadings have been in vain. Be it the factory workers, the Adivasis, the Dalits all of whom revolt only when their condition deteriorates and becomes unmanageable. The subaltern decision to participate in any rebellion or revolt is usually a conscious and independent decision taken by them to rise up against injustice.

9.7 POST - MODERNISM INFLUENCE

Social work is based on modernist ideology focussing on methods and interventions to help people and handle social problems thus bringing about social order. The foundation for social work knowledge is based on modernism that focusses on unity and brings together ideas into systematic framework.The belief was to identify the cause of client's problems through scientific means and accordingly plan interventions to eradicate the problem. But, modernism did not achieve this. Postmodernist social theory began to emerge in the 1960's and 1970's as a critical rejection of modernist foundations of knowledge.

Postmodernism on the other hand deals with plurality, ambiguity and diversity to manage constantly changing reality. It enables practitioners to

understand the dynamics of power and the authority of the service user also takes prominence. Postmodernism thereby helps social work practice to shift the attention from singular approaches to diversified knowledge in practice. Knowledge is contested which is also part of critical social work approaches, consisting of deconstructing knowledge and reconstructing social work practice to make it more emancipatory. The key feature of postmodernist thinking is the aspect of questioning what is happening.

Postmodernism has brought about epistemological revolution, a different level of freedom to social work thought, practice, research and training. Postmodern concepts enable social work practitioners to situate themselves as potential oppressors. This has enabled them to understand the complexities of power in the client - social worker relationship and many other areas and create empowering relationships. Postmodernism also promotes values of viewing people as integrated wholes; create community - based consciousness and plurality that are useful for social work profession. It proffers professional knowledge of technical concepts, theories, and methods, and it is a reflective, generative process of constructive meaning from multiple viewpoints.



Postmodernism has brought about epistemological revolution, a different level of freedom to social work thought, practice, research and training.

Postmodernism challenges the modern, global, all-encompassing world views whether it is political, religious or social. They reject the attempts to apply the model of natural science inquiry in the social science. They critique totality, reason and universality and claim that in the name of science, authority has been exercised in a variety of ways. It recommends that we should turn our attention away from the problematic to the people as a whole. People's goodness has to do with integrated wholeness and not with virtues. This postmodernism ideology has brought about visibility to the structural forces such as race, gender and class. It also led to a multidimensional understanding of social stratification, based on race, gender, education and occupation and not merely on class.

Social Work Anti-Oppressive Theory is an umbrella term reflecting different views and different types of theory. Rather, than a single approach, AOP [anti-oppressive practice] is an umbrella term for a number of social

justice oriented approaches to social work, including, feminist, Marxist, post-modernist, indigenous, post-structuralist, critical constructionist, anti-colonial and anti-racist.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: What is the era of post-modernism?

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Q 4: What is the Devi movement?

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9.8 LET US SUM UP

The reform movements represented the striving of the conscious and progressive sections of the Indian people to democratize social institutions and remodel old religious outlooks to suit the new social needs. Movements strived towards abolition of caste system, equal rights for woman, a campaign against child marriage, sati system, against the ban on widow remarriage and against social and legal inequalities. Gandhi, Ambedkar and Tilak were some of the most influential revolutionaries that transformed the mindsets of huge population in the country. The history of the feminist movement in the United States is often split into "three waves", which can help represent different theoretical perspectives. The first wave started with the women's suffrage movement in the late 1800s.



9.9 FURTHER READING

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9.10 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

Answer 1. A British missionary

Answer 2. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Answer 3. Postmodernist social theory began to emerge in the 1960's and 1970's as a critical rejection of modernist foundations of knowledge.

Answer 4. The Devi movement started as a small ceremony in 1921 among the fisher folk of Palghar taluk which spread slowly to other parts of Gujarat. The movement was aimed at reforming themselves, coming out of alcohol addiction and also as a rebellion against the Parsi liquor landlords and vendors who had subjected them to huge debts and bondage.



9.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q.1: What are the early organizations responsible for promoting welfare of the needy and underprivileged?

Q.2: Who is Antonio Gramsi?

Q.3: Name the Adivasi subaltern movement.

Q.4: Describe the role of reform movements in transforming society.

Q.5: Explain the perspectives of Gandhi in relation to social work philosophy.

Q.6: How did Ambedkar influence policy making to deal with social evils?

Q.7: Discuss feminist perspective of social work.

Q.8: How does post-modernism influence social work?