UNIT5: CONTEMPORARY IDEOLOGIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE - I

UNIT STRUCTURE

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5.1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of ideology
- describe the process of social change.
- analyse the contemporary ideologies for social change.

5.2. INTRODUCTION

Social work is basically a helping process where help is rendered towards an individual, group, community or the whole society. With the changing social values and norms, the problems are becoming more complex and affect large number of people. This necessitates the social work activity to encompass a number of functions in its wider context. In this unit we will discuss about the contemporary ideologies.

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, Postmodernism, Feminism and Multiculturalism.

5.3. FUNCTIONS of SOCIAL WORK

Social work functions are broadly divided into three: Remedial, provision of resources and prevention of social dysfunction.

1) **Restoration:** this function has two aspects - curative and rehabilitative. The activities of a social worker that helps individuals/ groups or communities to recognize their limits or overcome their problems that arise out of the disequilibrium between themselves and the environment are referred to as restorative functions.

- The **curative function** of social work seeks to eliminate or minimize factors that influence or cause social dysfunction of individual, groups or communities.
- The **rehabilitative function** assists in restoring the normal health or social functioning. This aspect of the function helps individuals and groups organize and reconstruct interactions



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Social work intervention comes into play at the interface between individual and his/her environment. This means that the individual/groups are in constant interaction with each other. The environmental factors such as social, economic, political or cultural could create a barrier for the effective functioning of a person/group. Through problem solving, the psycho social environment is modified and at the same time, it also aims to bring about attitudinal changes in those who receive the services. The factors responsible for the disturbance in the interpersonal relations/dysfunction are eliminated and the individual/group is helped to make changes and thereby adjust to the needs ofs the new situation. This helps place them back into the mainstream. A simple example of this function could be suggesting a hearing aid for a child who has hearing impairment (partial). This is a curative aspect. By using the hearing aid, the child is able to overcome his/her social dysfunction which was

caused by this impairment. Heling the child getting adjusted to the hearing aid will be the rehabilitative aspect of this function.

2. **Provision of resources:** This function is divided into two aspects - developmental and educational. The developmental aspects are designed to further the effectiveness of existing social resources or to maximize personal capacity. For example, marital counselling at a family therapy centre helps couples with marital problems to communicate effectively. The educational aspect is designed to acquaint the public with specific conditions and needs for new or changing resources. Public talks on the advantages of utilizing counselling services would be an example of the educational aspect.

3. **Prevention of social dysfunction:** This is also an important function of social work whch involves early discovery, control and removal of conditions and situations that could possibly hinder effective functioning. The main divisions of these functions are a) prevention of problems in the area of interaction between individuals and groups (premarital counselling) and b) prevention of social ills (community organization).The preventive function of social work is often neglected. Organizing youth club for young boys could prevent criminal acts and providing life skills training for adolescents can help prevent mental health issues.



Social work profession should work towards sensitizing, building awareness, capacity building and helping people organize themselves to prevent the emergence of social dysfunctions.

Social work lays a lot of emphasis on curative and rehabilitative functions and focuses on the problem solving model. In the ever changing context of the society, it should be kept in mind that preventive function of social work has an important role to play. Hence preventive approach to social work needs more attention. Social work profession should work towards sensitizing, building awareness, capacity building and helping people organize themselves to prevent the emergence of social dysfunctions. System changes need to be encouraged in order to develop favourable environment for development. Social work as a profession needs to shift from a purely status quo service oriented approach to a change oriented developmental approach.

Misra has categorized functions of social work into the following:

Curative/ Remedial Function: Under the curative function, the following services are provided: Medical services, health services, services relating to psycho- social and mental health, psychiatric service, child guidance, child welfare services, services for the handicapped and disabled and rehabilitative services.

Correctional Function: Correctional social work has 3 broad areas. They are-

i) individual reform services which include prison reform, probation, parole, other related services ii)services for strengthening and improving relationship- family welfare services, school social work, industrial social work, iii)services for social reform - employment services, prevention of prostitution, beggary, prohibition services and removal of untouchability.

Preventive Function: Prevention services include life insurance, public assistance, social legislation, labour welfare, adult education and prevention of diseases.

Developmental Function: Developmental tasks are socio-economic developmental activities, education and recreational services, urban and rural development programmes and the programme for integration.

5.3. CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Human society is dynamic. Hence it is difficult to predict the forms and directions of social change. The social change agents are not uniform and with advancement of science and technology, ideologies and social values too change. This change in turn triggers changes in the functions of social structure, social system and social institutions. In short, the social order changes. This alteration in the social order is called social change. 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

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change. Slow and simple forms of social change may intersect with quick and intricate forms of social change. Migration of illiterate persons from remote areas to metropolitan cities will affect 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.

5.4 CONTEMPORARY IDEOLOGIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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 majority of the population and argued in different 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. 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.

A 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 in the society.

There are various causes of social change. As Max Weber's puts it, values, beliefs, and ideologies have a decisive impact on shaping social change. These factors have certainly contributed to shaping directions of social change in modern world.

5. 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 (Saldanha, 1995). 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 (Sharma ,1998). After falling of the Berlin wall, in 1989, it became more difficult henceforth to envisage alternatives to capitalism. Largely victims of debt 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.

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Globalisation is the natural outcome of the neo-liberalist ideology, which promotes minimum government interference and considers market as the sole social regulator (George, Ramakrishnan and Cheriyan, 1997). 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.

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 which 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) were taking over national enterprises, which most typically resulted 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.

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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 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.

5. 4. 2 Globalization

'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.

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 (Bhaduri and Nayyar, 1996).

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 purchase 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. (Mc Michael, 1996). Globalization refers to the process of integration which is intensifying world - wide social relations and interdependence 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.

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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 (dreze and Sen, 2006). 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 distinct 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. The increasing trade and commerce between countries will bring prosperity to all. The sceptics doubt the potential of globalization in removing poverty and making all nations and peoples prosperous. According to them, the globalised economy is controlled by USA and Europe, and 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.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

1. How has industrialization and urbanization impact social change?

2. What was the main agenda of the Manifesto of People's Global Action?

5.4.3 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 a transcendent 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 imminent 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 (Nicholson, 1990).

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 (Rosenau, 1992). 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 (Nicholson, 1990). 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 has 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 (Rosenau, 1992).

Postmodernism provides forms of historical knowledge as a way of reclaiming power and identity for subordinate groups (Giroux, 1991).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 (Grusky and Takata, 1992).



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Earlier, property relations obscured ethnic ones, but now it is property that begins to seem derivative and ethnicity that seems to become a more fundamental source of stratification (Grusky and Takata, 1992). 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 (Alba, 1992). 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".

5.4.4 Feminism

During the 19th century, the liberalist ideology led to the emergence of liberal feminism, the first school of feminism thought. The second wave of feminism is dated from 1969 onwards. The United Nations Declaration of 1974 as the International Womens Year and 1976-85 as the International Decade for Women had led to a worldwide feminist movement (Marshall,1994).

Feminists differentiate between sex as a biological division between men and women and gender as the socially unequal division into femininity and masculinity Marshall, 1994). 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 (Grusky and Takata,1992). 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 (O'Rand,1992).

There are different schools 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 capitalist mode of production, which resulted in the spatial divide between domestic work and wage work and labelled them as non-productive and productive, respectively

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 (Poonacha, 1995).

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 (Pooncha,1995).

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 (Capra,1996).

5.4.5 Multiculturalism

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 defined and determined in terms of fictional majoritarian conceptions and values of Hinduism (Ahmed,1998).

According to Bhargava (1999), 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 underscores 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 (bhargava,1999).

The belated recognition has been that culture-relative self esteem matters to people as much as the fulfilment of material needs. 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. 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 (Bhargava,1999).

Thus, the communication standpoint questioned a political under constructed view purely from the vantage point of individual wellbeing. The importance of cultural particularity raised doubt about the desirability of a unicultural polity multiculturalism. It opposes cultural imperialism and homogenisation and opposes states whose only objectives are the survival and well being of the dominant cultural group. 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 is possible only after a degree of interaction, familiarity and mutual understanding. Communal politics thrive on false stereotypes, which constrain rather than help intercultural understanding (Bhargava,1999)

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 central to the democratic vision, simultaneously generates the temptation to nurture

strongly exclusionary ethnic or cultural nationalism. The democratic age itself possesses new obstacles to coexistence, which was possible to achieve within an undemocratic political structure (Bhargava, 1999).

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

3. What does the ideology of post modernism stand against?

4. State the perspective of eco-feminism.



5.5 LET US SUM UP



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

  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.
- 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
- Globalization refers to the process of integration which is intensifying world - wide social relations and interdependence 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.
- 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 explanations of feminism 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.



5.6 FURTHER READING

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5. 7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. 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 areas to metropolitan cities will affect 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.

2. 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) were taking over national enterprises, which most typically resulted 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.

3. 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.

4. Eco-feminism 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



5.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. What are the different functions of social work?
2. Define social change?
3. What is Neo Liberalism?
4. Discuss the impact of Neo liberalism on social change?
5. Define globalization and its relevance towards social change.
6. Write about post modernism and its impact on social change?
7. What is Feminism?
8. What are consequences of Feminism?
9. Discuss multiculturalism as a factor of social change?

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