

15 Dialectical Materialism

Dialectical Materialism is not the original idea of Marx. He borrowed this from Hegel. Hegel believed that it was a process under which all ideas in the world developed. He took historical process as something intrinsically comprehensible. He made distinction between the rational and the real.

Hegel used dialectic as the solution for apparent confusion in the world. Cole said, "What was happening in human history was not what seemed to be happening, but gradual and progressive actualization of the reality immanent in the absolute ideas. Everything was present in potentiality throughout the entire temporal process of development: but potential could not become actual only by means of the long struggle of the idea towards self-realisation through the conflict of imperfect ideas in history."

"The eyes believe themselves; the ears believe other people." - Proverb

Dialectic

According to Hegel the whole world is moving towards a definite object. Reality could not be achieved in the universe by "prima facie" seeing the things but by contrasting opposite things with each other. Goodness could be realised only when compared with badness and so on. Hegel presumed the first assertion as thesis and its contradiction as anti-thesis. Thesis and anti-thesis produced a new idea or something new which combined the qualities of both and he called it 'synthesis'. Hegel used this dialectical method to explain the progress of society and its various institutions.

Marx's formulation

Marx was very much influenced by dialectical idea of Hegel. He used it while formulating his theory of social revolution. In the words of Sabine, "Marx first formulated the theory of dialectical materialism in a series of works published between 1844-48 in which he both developed his ideas

"The face is the index of mind." - Proverb

17 of philosophy and jurisprudence, first formed during his years of study in the universities of Bonn and Berlin, and reformulated by French Socialism in the light of Hegelian principles.

Marx believed that 'Reason or Spirit' could not be the moving forces in history. Political and social changes are determined by 'material conditions'. By 'material conditions' he meant the forces of production and distribution of wealth; the former being (a) natural resources (b) machinery (c) man and his qualities and (d) time involved in producing goods.

Only economic factors changed the history. Cultural life of nation is dependent on its economic life. Even justice, charity and humanity were interlinked with the forces of production. Marx said, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their social existence, but on the contrary it is their social

"We walk by faith, not by sight." - The Bible

18 existence that determines their consciousness." Engels said, "In every historical epoch the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organisation necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which it is built up, and from which alone can be explained the political and economic life of that epoch."

