
UNIT 3 MATERIALISM AND MARXISM

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

Materialism is one of the most fascinating enquires in the history of ideas. Objective of this Unit is to provide a thorough historical and philosophical introduction to different materialist schools and their culmination in Marxian Materialism, which is known as Dialectical Materialism. The materialist world view had reached its zenith in the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. In this Unit, the continuum of materialist philosophy from antiquity to Marx is presented. (Whenever the words *Marx* or *Marxian* are used, they also imply the contributions of Engels, who had played an indiscernible role in development of Dialectical Materialism. However, Engels urged that their philosophy should be named after Marx, hence the name has been Marxian.)

As the title of the Unit suggests, Marxian Materialism is discussed at length, partially its applications in the analysis of history, society and political economy. It is impossible to furnish all the details pertinent Dialectical Materialism in this Unit. Hence adequate directions and list of primary and secondary writings, in References and Further Readings section, are provided for assisting students for further studies on this topic.

By the time of completion of this Unit, you should have a fair idea of -

- Materialism and idealism, basic differences,
- Materialism in ancient civilizations,
- Materialism in modern philosophy, especially in Marxian philosophy.

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO MATERIALISM

Materialism is a school of thought which holds the matter being the only existing substance and all worldly phenomena including those of thought and consciousness are results of interactions of different forms of the mater. The word 'materialism' first used by the mystical philosopher English Henry More in 1668. And a little later German philosopher Leibniz used it in one of his French works to name the thought of those who accept the existence of matter alone. Materialism has been the anti-thesis to Idealism which holds the consciousness, not matter, as the ground of all the existence.

The major postulations of Idealism are:

1. Material world is dependent on the spiritual world,
2. Spirit, mind or idea can and does exist independent of matter,
3. An unknowable realm exists beyond the human perception, experience and science.

The origin of Materialism was a challenge to Idealism and the basic postulations of Materialism are as following:

1. World is its by very nature material; everything which exists come into being on the basis of material causes, arises and develops in accordance with the laws of motion of matter,
2. Mater is an objective reality existing outside and independent of the mind and every idea is a product of psychological process about the material phenomena,
3. World and its laws are fully knowable. Much may not be known as of now; however, there is nothing, which cannot be known due to its defined nature. In such cases the 'unknown' cannot be known to those who declared its existence.

Materialism shares affinities with science and Atheism, like the Idealism does with theology and religion. However, they cannot be as the former primarily interested in the truism of independent existence of the world by providing scientific and philosophical explanations of the phenomena, the latter stands for the primacy of human world and nonexistence of god. Another major difference, a historical one, is - all the atheists were materialists, but all the materialists were not atheists. Though there had been materialist thinkers who were against non-sensual knowledge and god, many others did not refute the god due to different reasons.

3.2 MATERIALISM IN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

Idealist theories of the world origination were challenged as early as in 8th century BC. German philosopher Karl Jaspers observes that during the period between 800 BC. and 200 BC., which he called 'the Axial Age', similar revolutionary thinking appeared across the major world civilisations in the Middle East, India, China and the Occident, which had laid foundations for future religion, science and philosophy.⁴ All the ancient materialists - Carvakas and Vaisesikas in ancient India, Xun Zi and Wang Chung in ancient China and pre-Socratic philosophers in ancient Greece, who belonged this Age had built sound arguments in favour of Materialism. The subject matters dealt by them were including - the origin or the universe and human beings, relationship between human beings and the god and *vice versa*, human beings and social relationships and different sciences of the natural phenomena. In this section, the Materialism of ancient India and Greece, which had direct influence on modern Materialism are discussed.

Materialism in Ancient India and Greece

In ancient India, Carvaka and Vaisesika schools of thought had produced significant materialist explanations of the natural phenomena. Carvaka or Lokayata school declares that the nature is made up of four elements earth, water, fire

and air and these elements alone, when transformed into the body, intelligence is produced, just as the inebriating power is developed from the blend of certain ingredients; and when these are destroyed, intelligence at once perishes also. The Vaisesika is said to be the one of the first schools of thought that pronounced atomic theory in the history of ideas, in and around 2nd century B.C. Its founder Kashyapa, who was also called Kanada, propagated the atomic theory which held that the world is made up of *Paramanus* (atoms), which were indestructible particles of matter. While the Carvakas forecasted the major themes of modern science and rational agency of human being, Vaisesikas proposed the scientific theories which were later known as the law of conservation of matter and energy and Newton's law of universal gravitation.

The pre-Socratic Greek thought was a wonderful anthology on natural philosophy, which Aristotle called 'the physical school of thought'. The pre-Socratic thinkers believed that ultimate principle (*archê*) of the Being was one and made up of matter (*hulê*). They sought to determine the origin and nature of everything by identifying the most basic material element, that from which all things emerge and return. Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Heraclitus, Epicurus and Democritus were the major thinkers of Greek Materialism, who made extensive work on natural philosophy. While Thales, Anaximenes, Heraclitus held water, air and fire to be the *archê*; Anaximander and Anaxagoras held *Apeiron* (Infinite) and *Nous* (Mind) to be the ultimate principle, respectively. Heraclitus explained the phenomena of the world through his theory of flux. Leucippus, Democritus and Epicurus developed atomic theories, which had similar structures with that of modern physics, to explain the ultimate principle. These philosophers made important contributions to growth of ancient science by providing materialist explanations for quite a few of the natural phenomena. Greek Materialism enjoyed enormous influence over the Western thought. French and English Materialism were always closely related to *Democritus* and *Epicurus*. Francis Bacon, who rivals with René *Descartes* for the status of the Father of modern philosophy, held the Greek thinkers with high regard and Marx had acquired his foundational knowledge in Materialism from the ideas of Epicurus and Democritus, thus Greek Materialism bears an indelible mark on the development of modern Materialism.

3.3 MATERIALISM IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY

The pre-Marxian Materialism consists of three major schools - the English, French and German. While English school was developed majestic thinkers Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, French schools was developed by physicists Le Roy, Pierre Jean George Cabanis and La Mettrie, who based their arguments on the physics, not metaphysics, of Descartes. The ideas of German philosophers George Wilhelm Hegel and Ludwig Feuerbach prepared the foreground for Marxian Materialism. A survey of these schools would present a coherent idea about development of modern Materialism. It also narrates the history of the growth of Dialectical Materialism, since Marx and Engels had studied the works of their predecessors, in order to accept or refute their cases for materialism.

The English School

Karl Marx holds Great Britain to be the original home of all modern Materialism and Materialism as her born son. Bacon was the foremost thinker in the British Materialism, whom Marx described as the 'real progenitor of English Materialism'. For Bacon, natural philosophy is the only true philosophy and

physics, which is based on sense experience, is its chief component. Sense perception is the 'Rational Method' of investigation and 1) Induction, 2) Analysis, 3) Comparison, 4) Observation and 5) Experiment are its principal forms. However, Bacon's use of theology in developing his case for Materialism had given rise to a few inconsistencies, which were later addressed by Hobbes who systematized Bacon's ideas.

Hobbes shattered the theological prejudices of Baconian Materialism and brought out extensive arguments in favour of Bacon's Rational Method. He argues that, "It is impossible to separate thought from matter that thinks. This matter is the substratum of all changes going on in the world." However, he could not supply the proof for the fundamental postulation of the Method i.e. all the human knowledge originates from the world of sensation.

It was Locke who substantiated this postulation in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Locke refuted Descartes' theory of innate ideas which holds the reason as the prime cause of the human knowledge. He described mind as a *tabula rasa* – a white paper, upon which the Nature writes. He classified all the ideas into 'ideas of sense' and 'ideas of reflection'; and the latter are the mind's reflection upon its own activity. Locke's distinction of the ideas suggests how the sense experience supplies primary data for the knowledge, upon which the reason can work. Thus he substantiated Bacon's postulation of rational method.

The major limitation of English Materialism was it dealt only with the problems of epistemology. Engels described this limitation as an inevitable one imposed by the time, which was its strength and weakness at the same time. It was a strength since it had represented the scientific progress of the time and it was the weakness on the other hand as it led to growth of mechanistic Materialism, an incomplete version of modern materialism.

The French School

French Materialism, according to Marx, added societal dimension to English Materialism. The French school was a revolt against 17th century philosophy, which was full of theological and metaphysical speculations. The school was influenced by three strands of thought – physics of Descartes, English Materialism, particularly Locke's epistemology, and the opposition of *Pierre Bayle's* Materialism to 17th century *metaphysics* of Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche and Leibniz. This school could be further classified into a) mechanistic and b) socialistic variants.

While the former was inspired by Descartes' physics, the latter had grown out of Locke's epistemology. Their growth was organic and cannot be easily separated. The mechanistic school began with physician Le Roy who was inspired by Descartes' physics, which had endowed matter with self-creative power and conceived mechanical motion as its manifestation. He declared that soul was modus of the body and ideas were mechanical motions. This development was followed by another physician *La Mettrie* and reached its zenith in *Cabanis*, who perfected Cartesian Materialism in his treatise *Rapport du physique et du moral de l'homme*. This school gradually merged in the development of French natural science.

The socialistic school was developed by Claude Adrien Helvétius, a French philosopher. However, this socialism must not be identified with much advanced and polemical Marxian and non-Marxian variants of socialism of 19th and 20th

century. *Socialism in its initial forms was a theory about how the societal processes including governance shall be conducted by considering all the human beings equally. Helvétius, who had his philosophical roots in Locke's Materialism, extended the latter's epistemological arguments to social life. He argued that, "Man is not wicked, but he is subordinate to his interests. One must not therefore complain of the wickedness of man but of the ignorance of the legislators, who have always placed the particular interest in opposition to the general interest." He presupposed the equality of the human agency based on the Natural equality of human intelligence.* This socialistic trend was further developed by Charles Fourier and other forerunners of socialism, whom Marx called utopian socialists. French Materialism developed English materialist theory of epistemology into a social theory and Marx and Engels had considered it above the English one.

The German School

Interestingly in Germany the precursors of Marxian Materialism were not materialists. It was the major idealist philosopher Hegel who developed foundations for Marxian Materialism, unintentionally though. He had created a metaphysical kingdom, which inherited all the previous developments of metaphysics. With this new system, he explained every major social phenomenon of his time. Engels noted that Hegelian system had covered "an incomparably greater domain than any earlier system...logic, natural philosophy, philosophy of mind...philosophy of history, of right, of religion, history of philosophy, aesthetics, etc. — in all these different historical fields Hegel labored to discover and demonstrate the pervading thread of development." Despite their opposition to idealism, Engels equated development of Hegel's system, as part of the growth of German idealism, with political revolution in France in 18th century, which was openly combating against all official science, the church and the state.

According to Hegel's metaphysics, the *Spirit* or *Geist* exists ever since the eternity and it has been the actual living soul of all existence. Through different preliminary stages, it develops its own self. It alienates itself by turning itself into nature, where, *unconscious* of itself, disguised as a *natural necessity*. It goes through further process and reappears as man's consciousness, the subjective spirit. The subjective spirit further alienates itself in order to become objective spirit of the human societies and finally. It arrives at its fullest realization as Absolute Spirit in Hegel's system. According to him, the Geist underwent all such changes due to the dialectic laws of eternal process of Being and Becoming and further negation, to which all objective world and phenomena are subjected to.

Hegelian system has two major aspects to it: a) the *system*, which was world view of speculative metaphysics, and b) the *dialectical method*, which does not allow the existence of any *status quo*. Those who were politically and religiously conservative, including Hegel himself, emphasised much on the *system* and those who regarded the *dialectical method* as important formed the extreme opposition, the left Hegelian group. Thus, the supposed to be most conservative metaphysical system, which was the official philosophy of Prussian state indeed had a revolutionary element in it. With his dialectical method, Hegel made every thing in existence, including his own philosophy, a subject of Becoming and further negation. This trait was first discovered by the German poet Henrich Heine.

Bruno Bauer, Max Stirner, David Strauss and Ludwig Feuerbach, who represented the left wing of the Hegelian philosophy, had produced radical critiques of Christianity and arguments for materialism. Feuerbach's contribution, which influenced Marx and Engels in significant manner, was particularly outstanding. Feuerbach appreciated Hegel's explanations of societal phenomena such as religion, nation state, but refuted his abstract reasoning such as origin of Absolute Spirit. He declared that it was the nature which is basis for human relationships, not any 'abstract Idea' declared by Hegel. He criticised the existing philosophy becoming mouthpiece for theology. He elaborated his system thought in the form of anthropological Materialism, which was based on the relationship between humans and nature. Marx saw the successes of Feuerbach's in the following arguments:

- a) He had shown that philosophy was nothing more than religion brought into thought and developed in thought, and that it is equally to be condemned as another form and mode of existence of the estrangement of man's nature.
- b) He had founded *true Materialism* and *real science* by making the social relation of "man to man" the basic principle of this theory.
- c) He had opposed to the third step negation of the negation of Hegelian dialectic, which claims to be the absolute positive, the positive which is based upon itself and positively grounded in itself, which can be proved. Marx and Engels were initially inspired by the left Hegelians, particularly by Feuerbachian attack. Feuerbach was a vital link between Hegel and Marx. However, later they realised that the latter had fallen short of providing accurate arguments to counter the prevailing idealist philosophy. Hence they had retained the progressive parts and severely critiqued the overall arguments of the left Hegelians. Feuerbach was their major point of departure. Following are the three major limitations of Feuerbach's materialism, according to Marx and Engels.
 - a) Approach of Feuerbachian materialism was ahistorical. He attacked Hegel's idealist system stating that nothing could possibly exist outside the nature and man, however, he had not recognised the importance of human history, which was completely absent in his works. Hence, he could not refute the Hegel's idealist scheme of history i.e. the history of the Geist.
 - b) The second major limitation was his philosophy of religion, which holds that religion is the relation between human beings based on the affections, particularly between the two sexes and...in the love between "I" and "Thou". This forced association of human relations with the religion necessitates human relations to be conceived of as the new, true, religion.
 - c) The third limitation was Feuerbach had continued to cling to abstract thought in some form or other in his writings and could not base on concrete social and historical categories.

Marxian materialist system, which developed upon the well-built aspects of hitherto Materialism and inference of the modern science, included a philosophy of nature, a theory of history and a theory of society, all three derived from a common set of first principles and logically supporting each other.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What was Bacon’s Rational Method and how Locke substantiated it?

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2) What was the major difference between the English Materialism and the French Materialism?

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3.4 MATERIALISM AND MARXIAN PHILOSOPHY

Marxian arguments marked the fullest materialist shift in Hegelian philosophy and also developed disarming materialist arguments. Until the Marxian intervention, Materialism was not an argument with force against religion, which continued to resurface in materialist thought in some form or the other. Engels said, “The materialist outlook was taken really seriously for the first time and carried through consistently”, only in Marxism. It denied the Idealism the status of philosophy and equated it with theology. Marx acknowledged the successes of Feuerbach in establishing the hitherto philosophy being the encroachment of religion in thought expressed this idea. (Here philosophy must be understood for metaphysical part of it.) According to Marx, Idealism was not just an abstract theory of world view in philosophy, but a method of interpretation of every question of human existence, thus it was much direct confrontation.

Incorporation of Dialectical Method into materialist analysis made it a much cogent theory. Dialectical method is an approach to understand the phenomena of nature, which holds that all the things, processes and phenomena are in motion and undergo a constant change. Initially it was developed by Hegel in his Idealist system (Refer to ‘revolutionary element’ discovered by Henrich Heine in previous section) and given materialist form by Marx. The method essentially maintains that ‘Being’ of any idea, object or phenomena in its process of ‘Becoming’ creates its ‘own other’ and get ‘negated’ by it. Again this ‘negation will be negated’ to pave way to new Being. For example, the inhumane capitalism (Being) during the time of industrial revolution (in its Becoming) created its own other ‘the revolutionary proletariat’ and got ‘negated’ by it (Negation). However, it could survive by several gradual conversions; most of them forced and some were natural. The new forms of capitalism such as capitalism + welfare negated the need for revolutionary attitude among the proletariat (Negation of the Negation). Thus, the new Being of Capitalism was possible. This method is applicable to all materialist phenomena and processes, according to Marx.

The words ‘Dialectical Materialism’ and ‘Historical Materialism’ were not used

by Marx and Engels, but later created by later Marxian thinkers. Stalin said, “Our philosophy is called Dialectical Materialism because its approach to the phenomena of nature, its method of apprehending them, is dialectical, while its interpretation of the phenomena of nature, its conception of these phenomena, its theory, is Materialism”. Historical Materialism is the application of Dialectical Materialism to the study of society, economics and history.

At personal level, Marx’s started taking serious interest in materialist analysis of society after closely following deliberations of the Rhine Province Assembly during his editorship of the German newspaper *Rheinische Zeitung* between 1842 and 1843. By then, he was also inspired by the discovery of the cell, transformation of energy and Darwin’s theory of evolution. He developed an elaborated theory of Materialism during his visits to Manchester between 1841 and 1844. His grounding into materialist philosophy and mastery over Hegel’s philosophy and his grand intellectual visualization helped him to develop an overarching materialist theory, which revolutionized the outlook of the world. Engel’s philosophical collaboration with Marx helped in systematizing the body of knowledge of Marxian Materialism, which was significant in many ways. All the later philosophers including Lenin had garnered their knowledge of Marxian Materialism much from the writings of Engels.

The Critical Development

Marx and Engels had studied the all the previous – the Greek, the English, the French and the post-Hegelian German – versions of Materialism meticulously either to accept or refute the previous arguments. This critical development initially liberated Materialism from its mechanistic tendencies, which had roots in English and French Materialism. According to mechanism, all the natural phenomena could be explained by the rules of mechanistic motion. For example, world consists of nothing but interactions of the particles of the matter. This trend gained the reputation during 18th century during the advent of mechanical sciences.

This version was refuted by Marx and Engels due to its three weaknesses *viz.* a) it requires the conception of Supreme Being or Force, which started the world up, b) it seeks to reduce all processes to the same cycle of mechanistic interactions, hence cannot account for the development for the emergence of new qualities and new types of processes in nature, and c) it cannot account for the social development; it can provide no account of human social activity and leads to an abstract conception of human nature.

The major development of Marxian Materialism lies in turning the Hegel’s idealist dialectics into materialistic one. Engels explained this process fascinatingly in his *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*. One of the important statements of Hegel - All that is real is rational; and all that is rational is real – seems to be an approval to the status quo. Indeed it has been understood as endorsement to despotism, police government and censorship of the then Prussian King Frederick William III. However, Engels explains that Hegel never held everything that exists being the real without further qualification. For Hegel, any thing that should be real must also possess necessary value. Prussian state was real and hence rational as long as it holds its necessity in history. In 1789, French monarchy had become unreal as it lost its necessity to exist and became so irrational; hence it had to be destroyed by the Great Revolution, of which Hegel always speaks with the greatest enthusiasm.” Hence, “In the course of development, all that was previously real becomes

unreal, loses its necessity, its right of existence, its rationality. And in the place of moribund reality comes a new, viable reality – peacefully if the old has enough intelligence to go to its death without a struggle; forcibly if it resists this necessity.” Engels lucidly explains this development, “All that is real in the sphere of human history, becomes irrational in the process of time, is therefore irrational by its very destination... and everything which is rational in the minds of men is destined to become real, however much it may contradict existing apparent reality.” Thus Hegel was not simply refuted in Marxian philosophy, but a new start was made from his revolutionary side i.e. Dialectical Method.

Materialist Basis

The major contribution of Dialectical Materialism was it explained all the worldly phenomena from stand point of philosophy and provided materialist basis for every thing. Marx and Engels had not only attacked the encroachment of religion in philosophy, but also represented the development of science in philosophy and provided a materialist basis that has radicalized our perception of important aspects of human life including religion, philosophy, science and history.

The Marxian philosophical method was also materialistic. Rather than using the prevailing speculative style, which they hated, Marx and Engels had employed the arguments from the sciences, both physical and social, to make their cases. Hegel’s philosophy, political economy and Darwinian biology had supplied the data and insights for their subject matter. By avoiding speculative metaphysics, they avoided the abstract thought. By using the concrete categories of history, they produced the arguments which are axiomatic.

George Novack expounds the idea of material substance in Dialectical Materialism; “It conceives the universe in all its manifestations to consist of matter in motion. Matter should not be pictured as inert, characterless, and leaden, as it is often misrepresented by opponents of Materialism.” He further explains the material substance is dynamic with all possible forms which could be, “found to be electrically energetic, infinitely plastic, and, in organic beings, can even become sensitive, alive and intelligent.” This definition of matter is not a closed one, but open to the new forms of matter. Engels emphasised on the need to change of forms of Materialism according to the advancement in science. Going beyond the questions pertaining to physical matter, Marx and Engels had provided comprehensive theories of knowledge, society and history.

Theory of Knowledge

Marxian Materialism did not ask the long-standing epistemological questions in the way they had been asked i.e. how the knowledge possible etc. Rather it explored the materialist factors that govern the production of knowledge. Mind functioning is a thoroughly natural organic process. “If, as Materialism holds, everything in the universe consists of matter in motion, then the human mind must likewise be a material phenomenon... If the collective intelligence of mankind was developed out of nature and society, the mind of the individual does not and cannot exist except as a function of his brain and his body. The gradual growth of intelligence, the effects of hunger, narcotics, or the disappearance of intelligence at death testify to the dependence of mind upon its material bases” explains Novack.

From this standpoint, it is not difficult to answer the long pending questions of epistemology such as “How can we know the world around us?”. From its

very organic nature, human mind can contemplate about its surrounding phenomena and form different mental images such as concepts and ideas by labouring upon its possessed information. Upon the epistemological question of veracity of knowledge acquired by the human beings, Novack replies, “The test of man’s ability to know the external world truly is to be found in practice. Despite setbacks and stagnation, man’s intellectual comprehension of the world has steadily increased together with his practical mastery over nature.”

Theory of Society

In his *A Contribution to Critique of Political Economy*, Marx outlined his theory of society through the famous ‘Base and Super Structure’ metaphor. According to him, human beings enter into particular relations of productions and the totality of these relations forms the economic structure of a society. The economic structure is the base on which everything else such as art, religion, philosophy, education and politics would be based upon. It is not surprising that the super structural components most often echo with the opinions of the existing mode productions be it as feudalism or capitalism or socialism. Any change in the base would cause corresponding shift in super structure too. Marx applied this theory through out his philosophical, historical and economic analyses and demonstrated the primacy of economic factors in the changes of the society.

Theory of History

The word ‘History’ as used by Marx and Engels does not mean the past recorded by the historian. It means the social world in which men involved in making history live and by which they are determined; the action and interaction of man in society and totality of such actions. Marx refuted Hegel’s idealist scheme of history i.e. of the Spirit and proposed four fundamental premises for the human history. They are:

1. Existence of human individuals is the first premise of all human history, without whom ‘making’ of human history would be impossible.
2. The urge to satisfy the first needs such as quenching the thirst and hunger, need for clothing and shelter, from which the new needs emerge and this production of new needs is the first historical act.
3. Third premise is the men who labour to make their life begin to make other men, the human reproduction, to propagate their kind. This effort forms the relationships of man and woman, parents and children and the family.
4. The procreation has two dimensions, natural and social. After establishment of societies, human beings through their labour establish economic life by cooperating among themselves on a large scale; and the multitude of productive forces accessible to men determines the nature of society. All the economic and political institutions are built upon this premise.

Marxian philosophy of history – Historical Materialism – has been an astounding success and was adopted by historians across the world. It gave birth to T ‘history from below approach’, which is still an accepted method in historiography.

Criticism and Legacy

Dialectical Materialism was criticised and critiqued by thinkers such as Max

Weber, Karl Renner and Karl Popper. Weber objected such rigorous economic interpretation from the view point of cultural primacy over economy. (To understand Weber’s point, think how caste oppression, a cultural phenomenon, works.) Karl Renner, former president of Austria, demonstrated how the legal institutions would influence the course of economics in modern democracies. Marxian argument of economic primacy emerged during the time when legal institutions of the state had not taken their roots sufficiently. The modern states can very much keep the economic forces under check. Karl Popper, one of the most vocal critics of Marx in 20th century, criticised the latter’s historicism for its claim to predict the course of history, which simply is impossible. He accused Marx for producing such pseudo-scientific theory of history.

Despite the massive criticism, Dialectical Materialism still enjoys tremendous influence. Due to its influence, millions of people across the world have converted themselves into nontheists (sic). Karl Marx has become one of the three principle architects of modern social science along with Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. Isaiah Berlin, a prominent Liberal thinker held that Marx may be regarded as the ‘true father’ of modern sociology, “in so far as anyone can claim the title.” Popper stated Marx opened and sharpened our eyes in many ways and a return to pre- Marxian social science is inconceivable, stated Karl Popper. This Unit could be closed with an observation of success of materialist component in Marxism; though millions had lost faith in Marxian communism after fall of the USSR, a good number of them remain cling to their nontheist world outlook.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What was the ‘revolutionary element’ in Hegelian philosophy?

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2) How the philosophical progress happened from Feuerbach to Marx and Engels?

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3.5 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit we tried to provide the philosophical history of Materialism from ancient Greek period to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. We have seen how Materialism had developed in ancient and modern periods and its social and historical dimensions were also duly explained. In Marxian Materialism, development of the fundamental ideas was explained in detailed. We have also seen how the philosophical revolution of Marx and Engels had changed the outlook of millions of people across the world, which caused paradigm shift in our perception of science, religion, history, political economy and philosophy.

3.6 KEY WORDS

- Materialism** : See the given definition in section 3.1.
- Idealism** : See the given definition in section 3.1.
- Metaphysics** : A branch of philosophy which enquires into the fundamental reality of the world, which Aristotle described as ‘Study of the Prime Mover’ and the ‘Study of Being as Being’. His definition indicates the two trends of this branch. Metaphysics asks similar questions to those of physical sciences such as - what is fundamental block of this world. The answer may be ‘the atom’ or ‘divine substance’, based on the world view of those who reply.
- Didactical Method** : See the given definition in section 3.3
- Mechanistic Materialism** : See the given definition in section 3.3.
- Didactical Materialism** : See the given definition in section 3.3.
- Historical Materialism** : See the given definition in section 3.3.

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