



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.07.248>

## MARX'S CONCEPT OF CLASS STRUGGLE: A STUDY

**Bhriku Kalita**

Research Scholar

Department of Political Science

Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University

Namati, Nalbari, Assam, India

**Abstract:** "The history of all hitherto society is the history of class struggles"-Communist Manifesto (1848). Karl Marx's concept of class conflict is one of his most important theories. According to Marx, society is divided primarily by people's economic circumstances. Every society's economy is its base, and it is responsible for the overall superstructure of a society. Marxism's entire concept was founded on economics. Every society, according to Marx, has two antagonistic classes. The class enmity of the classes is to blame for the ongoing society's changes. In every society, economic conditions create class. Every society has a class rivalry between these classes which can transform society. The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx predicts that the world will become a classless society with no class struggle.

**Keyword:** Class struggle, Economic, Society, Production.

### Introduction

In the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" by Karl Marx Frederick Engels, Marx and Engels asserted that, "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle."<sup>1</sup>

"Freeman and Slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes."<sup>2</sup>

These above lines were the starting the 'Manifesto of the communist party'. The class struggle theory is an outcome of the theory of 'materialistic interpretation of history' by Marx.

### Methodology

This paper was written using theoretical analytical method as the methodology. The majority of the information in this study comes from secondary sources. Information was gathered from different of books, journals, newspapers, and relevant websites. For the purposes of this paper, data was collected from different types of books journals, papers, and websites.

### Objective

1. To understand the concept of class struggle
2. To find out the Reasons behind the class struggle.
3. To describe the relevance of class struggle in Indian perspective.

### What is class?

Every civilization has two classes, both of which are based on economics. Every society's mode of production has a significant impact on the formation of classes. In common parlance, class refers to the categorizing or division of one thing from another. This class is defined by economic standing in Marxist terms. In Marx's Capital Marx defined class affiliation as a person's relationship to the process of production. "Everyone who is simply placed in terms of ownership and control of the forces of production belongs to the same class".<sup>3</sup> The mode of production is solely in the hands of a few individuals. The classes who lack any means of production are oppressed by the oppressing class, which controls it. Despite the fact that the mode of production changes with the passage of time, class divides remain constant. "Production relations in actuality class relations" is an important part of the history of our society.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marx and Engels: Manifesto of the communist Party,1948.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Jha,Shefali,Western Political Thought,2010,p.226

<sup>4</sup> Mukherjee,S.,Ramaswamy,S.,A History of Political Thought,p.448



Cover Page



### Class conflict

In every stage of society, one class controls the mode of production while others do not. Marxists argue that there are two classes in every society, and their values are fundamentally opposed. The course of history is divided into different stages, with each stage taking place at different times. The oppressor class is the one who owns the mode of production and is continually trying to control or exploit another class that does not own it. They were referred to as the "haves" and "have-nots" by Marx. The oppressed class reaps the benefits or profits of all production, whereas the oppressed class generates this profit through their labour. This process creates a gap between classes. There have been no classes in the early communist society with no divisions. Everything was created socially by the people who lived in that culture and there was no such thing as private property back then. There were no such things as a class system or social hierarchies. After the invention of new production methods, class segregation emerged in Marx's Marxist society. Marx and the other Marxist philosophers were the founders of the Marxist school of thought. There will always be two classes if it is not a communist society, according to the philosopher. The communist society, according to Marx and other Marxist theorists, will be classless.

The capitalist society, according to Marx, will be overthrown by the proletariats through a social revolution. The means of production are in the hands of a few capitalists with the workers making up the majority. Labor is compelled to intervene in accordance with the wishes of capitalists, which has led to frustration. Every society has a dichotomy between the upper and lower classes. The oppressed class always wants to dominate or oppress the oppressor class, and the oppressed class wants to break free from this system. The rich class is constantly attempting to extract more and more economic benefits from the poor class. In Karl Marx's Capital, the poor class wishes to become wealthy, and as a result of this class antagonism, an open or concealed struggle between these classes continues until the society changes. Marx believed that many types of society would come and go, but at the end of the day, society will be classless. There will be no exploitation or dominance in this type of society. There will be a proletarian dictatorship, and the class war will be ended with the formation of a communist state. The world is going to become a socialist country.

### Reasons behind class struggle

The class struggle is driven by the different classes' diametrically opposed social positions and antagonistic interests, says Dr. John O'Donovan. He argues that there are other factors involved in class conflict as well as distinct class interests such as a lack of respect for each other's views."<sup>5</sup> In a capitalist society, capitalists want maximum profits at the lowest cost possible, while laborers seek the highest possible wage for their labour. The nature of conflicting interests is the source of class struggle, writes John Defterios in his new book, 'The Class Struggle'. Exploitation is the basis of all class conflicts. Other important factors also include working class's effort to reduce exploitation, the increase of consciousness, and the maturity of contradiction. The capitalists' goal is to make the working class happy. All of these concerns are related to the class struggle.

### Dictatorship of the proletariat

"The concept of a dictatorship was central to Marx's understanding of the nature of communist society and the role of the proletarian state. The concept of proletariat dictatorship was also central to the Marxist theory of the class struggle in the 19th century."<sup>6</sup> The working class will unite against the capitalist as a result of capitalist exploitation, Marx argues. But the proletariat will not be able to establish a communist society immediately once capitalism has ended, he says. In a capitalist society, class struggle led to proletarian dictatorship, according to Marx. This dictatorship of the proletariat is the transitional phase between capitalism and communism.

"The proletariat will seize all capital from the bourgeoisie, to concentrate all manufacturing processes in the hands of the state, i.e., the ruling class, and to quickly expand total productive forces. The proletariat will utilize its political power to gradually seize control of the industrial and financial sectors."<sup>7</sup>

During the proletariat's dictatorship, all rules and regulations, institutions, and organizations will be abolished, and new laws, rules and regulations, and institutions will be established. During the revolution, a new government will be set up with the aim of creating a socialist state. The workers will take over the state, demolish all of the old class's privileges, and prepare for the state's final demise. Following the proletariat's rule, a classless communist state will emerge.

<sup>5</sup> Das,P.G.,History of Political Thought,2017.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Marx and Engels, Menifesto of the Communist Party,1948.



Cover Page



### Criticism

No theory is perfect. Each theory has certain criticisms. The class struggle theory is also the same. It has some drawbacks. We can point out some of these as follows.

Theories of class conflict in Marx's theory of class struggle are shaky, says Andrew Keen. Keen Marx did not provide a precise definition of class in his idea of class conflicts. He argues that Marx overlooked the importance of the middle class in any society founded on social classes.

Karl Marx's concept of two classes is no longer socially acceptable in society, says Dr. Andrew Wightman. He argues that there are a variety of classes that may be categorised according to dominance or exploitation. In the past, Marx ignored societal classes in favour of focusing on economic divisions, he says.

Proper claimed that, "In the 19th century, Karl Marx described capitalism as a system of money, power and wealth. But his version of capitalism was much more complex than he described it to be. He prioritized the economics over considerations such as religion, patriotism, and friendship. The economist's view of society was considerably more complicated than Marx's description."- Proper (1996)

Karl Marx's prediction of a capitalist society based on wealth conflict appears to have failed in modern environment. Capitalist countries are expanding on a regular basis, and the working class is content in this sort of society.

It is uncertain whether or not a proletarian dictatorship will emerge when capitalism is abolished, writes David Frum. If capitalism dominance is unacceptably oppressive, how can proletarian dominance be? He asks. Frum The only answer is that it may be possible to create a new type of civilization after capitalism?

### Relevance

"The Marxist goal of a classless society free of strife and based on equality remained a utopian dream." <sup>8</sup> Some Marxist concepts appear to be utopian since the current situation differs dramatically from Marxist perspectives. Marxism argues that communism or socialism will eventually supplant capitalism. But this kind of imagination is no longer useful, says Professor David Frum. He asks Why is class struggle and other Marxist doctrines losing relevance?

Class conflict theory is an important part of Marxist philosophy. It helps to comprehend the affluent class's exploitation and dominance over the poor. It gives the oppressed classes hope in their fight against the exploiting class, according to some critics.

### Class at present India

India's economy exhibits a number of capitalistic characteristics, but it is vastly different from Marx's depiction of a capitalist society. In India's economic system, both the state and individuals have certain powers of restriction. The Indian economy is expanding at a rapid pace.

In India, there is a social class known as the "middle class" that plays an important role in all sectors of society. This class is neither wealthy nor impoverished; rather, it falls somewhere in the between. The middle class is not rich or poor; it just happens to be middle class. The middle class in India has a different standing than those in the upper and lower classes. This middle class also plays a big role in Indian politics, culture, and other sectors. The middle class is an important part of the country's economy, as well as its political system.

In India, social classes are determined by caste and religion. In society, region also forms classes. Marx thought that the economy is the foundation of all societies and that all other aspects of society are dependent on it. But in India, there is some type of distinction between the individuals as higher and lower. In India, castes, religion, geography, geography and a variety of other concerns play a significant role in the country's economic problems. In India, we can observe how the economy is reliant on all of these difficulties at times. Unfortunately, this is not exactly true in India.

<sup>8</sup> Mukherjee.S.,Ramaswamy.S., A History of Political Thought,2017.p.477



Cover Page



## Conclusion

This paper has given a brief understanding on class struggle. In the conclusion it can be say that there are some importance of debate and discussion on this topic. Marx's main motive was how to form a classless society and the class struggle theory is a process to achieve that motive. It is a situational demand to overcome class distance which is one of the key concepts of Marxism.

## Reference

- Barker, C. (2006) 'Capital and Revolutionary Practice'. Historical Materialism 14(2): 55-82.
- Gauba, O.P. (2018). Western Political Thought. New Delhi: Mayur Books.
- Gauba, O.P. (2018). An Introduction to Political Theory. New Delhi: Mayur Books.
- Harvey, D. (2010). A Companion to Marx's Capital. London: Versa.
- Jha, S. (2010). Western Political Thought. Delhi: Pearson.
- Marx, Engels. (1948). Menifesto of the Communist Party.
- S.Mukherjee, S Ramaswamy. (2016). A History of Political Thought Plato to Marx. Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited.
- Shing, M.P., Roy, Himanshu. (2017). Indian Political Thought: Themes and Thinkers. Delhi: Pearson.