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6.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit deals with Historical Materialism. After studying it you should be able to

- discuss the theory of historical materialism
- describe Marx's view of society and social change
- outline the contribution of historical materialism to sociology.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

You have already studied the context in which sociology emerged in Europe and learnt about the impact of the Industrial Revolution on its founders.

Here we will deal with one of the founders, namely, Karl Marx. His ideas were full of sociological insights. Historical materialism, the subject matter of this unit, is the scientific core of Marx's sociological thought. Therefore, it is necessary to situate historical materialism within the overall context of Marx's work and his contributions to sociological theory. For this purpose the unit deals first with the brief background of the philosophical and theoretical origins of historical materialism in the context of its intellectual and social milieu. Then we go on to a discussion of certain basic assumptions upon which the theory of historical materialism is built. This is followed by an exposition of the theory of historical materialism and Marx's reasons for refuting economic determinism. Finally, the unit lists certain important contributions of historical materialism to sociological theory. A proper understanding of the above sections will help you to study the coming units related to other aspects of Marx's thought.

6.2 HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

Marx's general ideas about society are known as his theory of historical materialism. Materialism is the basis of his sociological thought because, for Marx, material conditions or economic factors affect the structure and development of society. His theory is that material conditions essentially comprise technological means of production and human society is formed by the forces and relations of **production**. Later in this unit, and in the next unit you will learn about the meaning of the forces and relations of production. Here, let us tell you why Marx's theory of society, i.e., historical materialism is historical. It is historical because Marx has traced the evolution of human societies from one stage to another. It is called materialistic because Marx has interpreted the evolution of societies in terms of their material or economic bases. Materialism simply means that it is matter or material reality, which is the basis for any change. The earlier view, that of Hegel, was that ideas were the cause of change. Marx opposed this view and instead argued that ideas were a result of objective reality, i.e., matter and not vice versa.

In his efforts to understand society in its entirety, he has not confined himself to examining the structure of human societies at a given point of time. He has explained the societies in terms of the future of humankind. For him it is not enough to describe the world. He has a plan for changing it. Thus, his sociological thinking largely concerns the mechanism of change. To understand social change, he has derived its phases from the philosophical ideas of Hegel, the German philosopher. About these phases also, we will learn later in the last unit of this block.

At this point, let us clarify that we are here concerned with Marx's sociological ideas only. We are not dealing with various brands of Marxism and the interpretations of Marx's ideas which became the official ideology of Communist regimes.

To turn back to Marx's theory of historical materialism, you need to look at it as Marx's general theory of society, which deals extensively with the contradictions found in the capitalist societies of his times. According to Friedrich Engels the theory of historical materialism was discovered by

Karl Marx, but Marx thought it was Friedrich Engels who had conceived the materialist formulation of history independently. We shall say that both of them used this theory, to quote Marx, as the ‘guiding thread’ of all their works.

In Engels’ view the theory of historical materialism takes a special view of history. In this view Engels seeks the final cause and the spirit behind historical events. Both Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels stress the scientific nature of their views of history. In the *German Ideology* (1845-6) Marx and Engels assert that their views of history are based on observation and an exact description of actual conditions. For discussing all parts of this theory you will need to follow the background which has provided a framework to his ideas about society.

6.2.0 Background

Marx’s childhood and youth fell in that period of European history when the reactionary powers (favouring monarchical political order) were attempting to eradicate from post Napoleonic Europe all traces of the French Revolution. There was, at the same time, a **liberal** movement (favouring autonomy of the individual and standing for the protection of political and civil liberties) in Germany that was making itself felt. The movement was given impetus by the Revolution in France. In the late 1830s a further step toward radical criticism for extreme changes in existing socio-political conditions was made by the young Hegelians (a group of people following the philosophy of Hegel). To learn about Hegel and his philosophy see Box 6.1 and 6.2. This was the group with which Marx became formally associated when he was studying law and philosophy at the University of Berlin.

Although he was the youngest member of the young Hegelians, Karl Marx inspired their confidence, respect and even admiration. They saw in him a ‘new Hegel’ or rather a powerful anti-Hegelian.

Box 6.1: G.W.F. Hegel

Georg Wilhelm Hegel was born in Stuttgart on August 27, 1770 and died in Berlin on November 14, 1831. He was the son of a revenue officer. He studied classics, theology and philosophy at the University of Tubingen and became in 1805, at the age of 35, a professor at the University of Jena. His main works are *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807), *The Science of Logic* (1812), *The Philosophy of Right* (1821), and *The Philosophy of History* (1830-31).

In the context of Hegel’s influence on Marx, you need to note that Marx was influenced by (i) Hegel’s philosophy of history and (ii) his science of logic. Both these aspects of Hegel’s theories are given in Box 6.2.

Among other influences the intensive study of **B. de Spinoza** (1632-1677) and **A. Hume** (1711-1776) helped Marx to develop a positive conception of democracy. It went far beyond the notions held at the time by radicals

in Germany. The radicals consisted of a political group associated with views, practices and policies of extreme change.

6.2.0.0 Marx's Faith in Democracy

The intellectual heritage from which Marx drew his insights, attitudes and concepts was a synthesis of many ideological currents in Europe of the early and middle nineteenth century. These included the basic assumptions of democratic faith and slogans of the French Revolution.

6.2.0.1 Democracy and Communism

Marx's adherence to a radical view of democracy was also based on the study of such historical events as the revolutions in England, France and America. From these historical studies he concluded that a transitory stage of **Proletarian** democracy must normally and inevitably culminate in communism. According to Marx, communism is a system in which goods are owned in common and are accessible to all. After his conversion to communism Marx began his prolonged studies of economics. While he was still developing from a liberal into a communist, he learned a great deal from European thinkers, such as B. de Spinoza, L. Feuerbach and Alexis de Tocqueville.

Activity 1

Do you think that Karl Marx's ideas are useful for studying Indian society? Give at least two reasons for your negative/positive answer.

6.2.0.2 Conception of History

The epoch to which Marx belonged had its beginnings in the French Revolution. But its historical dimensions coincided with those of the whole era of industrial and social revolutions and extended into modern era. This is the reason for the lasting appeal of a body of thought that is by no means free from history.

Before the age of thirty, Marx produced a number of works which together provide a relatively adequate outline of his "materialist conception of history". Though Marx never wrote explicitly on historical materialism, his writings during the years 1843-8 refer to it in a fragmentary fashion. For him, it was not a new philosophical system. Rather it was a practical method of socio-historical studies. It was also a basis for political action. The framework for this theory was obviously derived from Hegel. Like Hegel, Marx recognised that the history of mankind was simply a single and non-repetitive process. Likewise he also believed that the laws of the historical process could be discovered. You will soon see in Box 6.2 how Marx deviated from Hegelian philosophy. Many others among the Young Hegelians found defects in Hegel's ideas and they proceeded to build a new system of thought. But only Marx could consistently develop a new set of ideas which in fact superseded Hegelian theories about society.

Box 6.2: Hegel's Philosophy of History

Hegel was a liberal in the sense that he accepted the rule of law rather than the rule of individual persons. In this way, he accepted the authority of the Prussian **state** (former kingdom and state of Germany). His philosophy belonged to the idealist tradition. This tradition began with Immanuel Kant and reached its zenith with Hegel. According to the idealist tradition, reason is the essence of reality and the spirit of Reason expresses itself during the course of history. Hegel also argued that history comprises the growth of Reason to awareness of itself. He considered the constitutional state to be the summit or highest point of history. Hegel views history as 'progress in the consciousness of freedom'. This consciousness of freedom, according to Hegel, is best expressed in religion, and development in religious concepts and ideas shows the degree of the consciousness of freedom in particular forms of social organisation. In other words, advances in religious and philosophical ideas correspond with socio-political progress. For Hegel, human history was progressing in the direction of Christianity, the Reformarian, the French Revolution and constitutional monarchy. He also held that only educated state officials, administering a constitutional monarchy, understood the ideas of human progress. Followers of Hegel's ideas came to be known as the Young Hegelians. Marx was also one of them. The Young Hegelians went further and asserted that not only the educated officials but all citizens could acquire the ability to understand the ideas of human progress. Karl Marx also developed his ideas of human history initially on the basis of Hegel's views. But in course of time he too joined hands with the Young Hegelians and eventually evolved his own ideas on the history of human society i.e., historical materialism. In doing so, he is said to have put Hegel on his head, i.e., Marx criticised Hegel's conservative ideas on religion, politics and law.

Hegel's Science of Logic

Marx rejected Hegel's faith in Idealism but adopted and adapted Hegel's use of the dialectical methodology. We will discuss this topic in Unit 9 of this Block, but let us here mention Hegel's basic position regarding dialectics.

According to Hegel, each thesis has its antithesis. The thesis represents the positive view and the antithesis represents the opposite or negative view. It means that each statement of truth has its opposite statement. The antithesis or the opposite statement is also true. In course of time, the thesis and antithesis are reconciled in the form of synthesis. The synthesis is the composite view. As history progresses, the synthesis becomes a new thesis. The new thesis then has an antithesis, with eventual prospect of turning into a synthesis. And thus goes on the process of dialectics.

While Hegel applied this understanding of the process of dialectics to the progress of ideas in history, Marx accepted the concept of dialectics but did not, like Hegel, perceive truth in the progress of ideas. He said that matter is the realm of truth and tried to reach the truth via materialism. This is why Marx's theory is known as historical materialism while Hegel's system is called dialectical idealism.

You may ask what is materialism? Materialism seeks the scientific explanations of things, including even religion. The idea of materialism may be opposed to the concept of idealism. Idealism refers to a theory that ultimate reality lies in a realm of transcending phenomena. Materialism, on the other hand, contends that everything, that exists, depends upon matter. We can speak of three kinds of materialism, namely, philosophical materialism, scientific materialism and historical materialism. Without going into terminological details of the first two kinds, we clarify that historical materialism emphasises the fundamental and causal role of production of material conditions in the development of human history.

Marx traced historical events in the light of materialistic understanding of reality. You may also be interested in learning about Marx's approach to history.

6.2.0.3 Sociological Approach to History

In sketching out his theory of society and history, Marx repudiated Hegelian and Post-Hegelian speculative philosophy. He built on Feuerbach's anthropological naturalism and developed instead a humanist ethics based on a strictly sociological approach to historical phenomena. Drawing also on French materialism and on British empiricism and classical economics, Marx's theory sought to explain all social phenomena in terms of their place and function in the complex systems of society and nature. This was without recourse to what may be considered metaphysical explanations clearly outlined in those early writings of Hegel and his followers. This eventually became a mature sociological conception of the making and development of human societies. Before turning to basic assumption of the theory of historical materialism, let us learn in Box 6.3 about Feuerbach whose ideas influenced Karl Marx in a tangential manner only.

Box 6.3

L. Feuerbach was born on July 28, 1804 at Landshut, Bavaria and died on September 13, 1872 at Nuremberg. He was a materialist philosopher. His criticism of Hegel's ideas on religion had influenced the writings of the young Marx. Feuerbach was a student of theology and later became interested in philosophy. In 1824, he attended Hegel's lectures and as a result he gave up his religious faith and turned to Hegelian philosophy. In his book, *Thoughts on Death and Immortality* (1830), he denied the immortality of the soul. This idea caused a great deal of stir among the intellectuals of his day. Because of his anti-religious views he was denied the professorship of philosophy. As a protest he stopped teaching and became a private scholar. He published many critical articles on Hegel's idealism and developed his ideas on materialism. In 1850, Feuerbach became fully convinced of medical materialism and held that humans are determined by the nature and quality of their food. We find that interest in Feuerbach's ideas was only a passing phase in Karl Marx's intellectual growth.

6.2.1 Basic Assumptions

Historical materialism is based upon a philosophy of human history. But it is not, strictly speaking, a philosophy of history. It is best understood as sociological theory of human progress. As a theory it provides a scientific and systematic research programme for empirical investigations. At the same time, it also claims to contain within it a revolutionary programme of intervention into society. It is this unique combination of scientific and revolutionary feature which is the hallmark of Marx's original formulation. The complex and at times uneasy relationship between the scientific and revolutionary commitments of this theory of society (historical materialism) has been one of the principal grounds of debate among Marxist sociologists. However, here we will be primarily concerned with only the scientific aspect of historical materialism. Before proceeding to discuss the theory of historical materialism, let us also tell you briefly about Marx's views on human society and human nature.

6.2.1.0 Society as an Interrelated Whole

Marx views human society as an interrelated whole. The social groups, institutions, beliefs and doctrines within it are integrally related. Therefore, he has studied their interrelations rather than treating them separately or in isolation. Such aspects as history, politics, law, religion or for that matter education cannot be treated as separate spheres.

6.2.1.1 Changeable Nature of Society

Marx views society as inherently mutable, in which changes are produced largely by internal contradictions and conflicts. Such changes, if observed in a large number of instances, according to Marx, show a sufficient degree of regularity to allow the formulation of general statements about their causes and consequences. Both these assumptions relate to the nature of human society.

6.2.1.2 Human Nature and Social Relationships

There is one other assumption behind historical materialism without which the theory cannot be held together. This relates to the concept of human being in general. According to Marx there is no permanent persistence of human nature. Human nature is neither originally evil nor originally good, it is, in origin, potential. If human nature is what human beings make history with, then at the same time it is human nature which they make. And human nature is potentially revolutionary. Human will is not a passive reflection of events, but contains the power to rebel against circumstances in the prevailing limitations of 'human nature'.

It is not that people produce out of material greed or the greed to accumulate wealth. But the act of producing the essentials of life engages people into social relationships that may be independent of their will. In most of human history, according to Marx, these relationships are **class** relationships that create **class struggle**.

Check Your Progress 1

Tick the correct answer in the following questions.

- i) Who among the following scholars did Marx draw his philosophical inspiration from ?
 - a) Comte
 - b) Spencer
 - c) Hegel
 - d) Aristotle
 - e) Confucius
- ii) Which of the following statements are not acceptable to historical materialism?
 - a) Humans are the most biologically determined species of all.
 - b) Human nature is basically evil.
 - c) Humans are forever happy to live in a class society.
- iii) Which of the following is an essential feature of historical materialism?
 - a) Society takes birth, grows and changes like an organism.
 - b) Society is inherently mutable in which changes are produced by internal contradictions.
 - c) Society starts as a small aggregate and with the passage of time grows in size.
 - d) Society develops with the development of its scientific personnel.

6.2.2 The Theory

Here, we will put in simple words Marx's views about the happenings within the society. His thought is essentially confined to interpreting the capitalist society of his times. He shows contradictory or antagonistic nature of capitalist society. Let us see how he goes about this task. This exercise will lay threadbare Marx's theory of historical materialism.

Clearer exposition of the theory of historical materialism is contained in Marx's 'Preface' to *A contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859). Here, he says that the actual basis of society is its economic structure. For Marx economic structure of society is made of its relations of production. The legal and political **superstructure** of society is based on relations of production. Marx says that relations of production reflect the stage of society's force of means of production.

Here, you have come across terms, such as, relations of production, **forces of means of production** and superstructure. Let us tell you that these terms carry special connotations in Marxist thought. You will learn in detail about each of them as you read further units of this block (also see Key Words in this unit). At present, you need to focus on the thrust of Marx's argument.

His contention is that the process of socio-political and intellectual life in general is conditioned by the mode of production of material life. On the basis of this logic, Marx tries to construct his entire view of history.

He says that new developments of productive forces of society come in conflict with existing relations of production. When people become conscious of the state of conflict, they wish to bring an end to it. This period of history is called by Marx the period of social revolution. The revolution brings about resolution of conflict. It means that new forces of production take roots and give rise to new relations of production. Thus, you can see that for Marx, it is the growth of new productive forces which outlines the course of human history. The productive forces are the powers society uses to produce material conditions of life. For Marx, human history is an account of development and consequences of new forces of material production. This is the reason why his view of history is given the name of historical materialism. In a nutshell, this is the theory of historical materialism.

In brief, we can say that Marx's theory of historical materialism states that all objects, whether living or inanimate, are subject to continuous change. The rate of this change is determined by the laws of dialectics (see Box 6.2 and Unit 9). In other words, there are forces which bring about the change. You can call it the stage of antithesis. The actual nature of change, i.e., the stage of synthesis, will be, according to Marx, determined by the interaction of these two types of forces. Before explaining in some detail further connections which Marx makes to elaborate this theory, it is necessary to point out that different schools of Marxism provide differing explanations of this theory. We are here confined to a kind of standard version in our rendering of historical materialism. We should keep in mind that materialistic conception of history is not a rough and ready formulation for explaining different forms of social organisation. Let us now, once again explain Marx's theory of historical materialism by explaining, in brief, the terms mentioned above.

6.2.2.0 Social Relations, Over and Above Individuals

Marx says that as a general principle, the production of material requirements of life, which is a very basic necessity of all societies, compels individuals to enter into definite social relations that are independent of their will. This is the basic idea of Marx's theory of society. He stresses that there are social relations which impinge upon individuals irrespective of their preferences. He further elaborates that an understanding of the historical process depends on our awareness of these objective social relations.

6.2.2.1 Infrastructure and Superstructure

Secondly, according to Marx, every society has its infrastructure and superstructure. Social relations are defined in terms of material conditions which he calls infrastructure. The economic base of a society forms its infrastructure. Any changes in material conditions also imply corresponding changes in social relations. Forces and relations of production come in the category of infrastructure. Within the superstructure figure the legal,

educational and political institutions as well as values, cultural ways of thinking, religion, ideologies and philosophies.

6.2.2.2 Forces and Relations of Production

The forces of production, according to Marx, appear to be the capacity of a society to produce. This capacity to produce is essentially a function of scientific and technical knowledge, technological equipment, and the organisation of labour. The relations of production arise out of the production process but essentially overlap with the relations in ownership of means of production. Relations of production should not be entirely identified with relations of property. At certain points in time, Marx speaks in terms of transformation of society from one stage to another. In explaining the process of transformation, Marx has given us a scheme of historical movement.

6.2.2.3 Social Change in Terms of Social Classes

Marx elaborates the significance of the infrastructure of society by tracing the formation of the principal social classes. He develops the idea of social change resulting from internal conflicts in a theory of class struggles. For Marx, social change displays a regular pattern. Marx constructs, in broad terms, a historical sequence of the main types of society, proceeding from the simple, undifferentiated society of 'primitive communism' to the complex class society of modern capitalism. He provides an explanation of the great historical transformations which demolish old forms of society and create new ones in terms of infrastructural changes which he regards as general and constant in their operation. Each period of contradiction between the forces and the relations of production is seen by Marx as a period of revolution.

6.2.2.4 Dialectical Relationship between the Forces and Relations of Production

In revolutionary periods, one class is attached to the old relations of production. These relations hinder the development of the forces of production. Another class, on the other hand, is forward looking. It strives for new relations of production. The new relations of production do not create obstacles in the way of the development of the forces of production. They encourage the maximum growth of those forces. This is the abstract formulation of Marx's ideas of class struggle.

Revolutions and History of Societies

The dialectical relationship between the forces of production and relations of production provides a theory of revolution. In Marx's reading of history, revolutions are not political accidents. They are treated as social expression of the historical movement. Revolutions are necessary manifestations of the historical progress of societies. Revolutions occur when the conditions for them mature. Marx (1859: Preface) wrote, 'No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces, for which there is room in it, have been developed; and the new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society'.

Let us take an example. Feudal society developed capitalist relations of production. The French revolution occurred when the capitalist relations of production reached a degree of maturity in Europe. Marx here spoke of another process of transformation from capitalism to socialism. Now capitalist societies became the arena for development of socialist relations of production. This is how Marx interpreted historical movement of societies.

6.2.2.5 Social Reality and Consciousness

We have said before that Marx has made a distinction between infrastructure and superstructure. At the same time he has also distinguished social reality and consciousness. For Marx, reality is not determined by human consciousness. According to him, social reality determines human consciousness. This results in an overall conception of the ways of human thinking that must be explained in terms of social relations of which they are a part.

Besides the forces and relations of production Marx has spoken about the modes of production. Accordingly, he has described stages of human history in terms of the four modes of production, namely, the Asiatic, Ancient, Feudal and Capitalist. The history of the West according to him, tells us about the ancient, feudal and capitalist (bourgeois) modes of production. The ancient mode of production is characterised by slavery, the feudal mode of production by serfdom, and the capitalist mode of production by wage earning. They constitute three distinct modes of exploitation of human labour in Western societies. Asiatic mode of production which does not constitute a stage in Western history is distinguished by the subordination of all people to the state or the state bureaucracy.

The above discussion of the theory of historical materialism should not lead you to consider it a case of economic determinism. Next section (6.3) will explain why we should not look at the theory of historical materialism in mere economic terms. Let us complete Activity 2 before going on to the next section.

Activity 2

What are the words for materialism, production, revolution and consciousness in your mother tongue? To explain these terms, give examples from your own social life.

6.3 HISTORICAL MATERIALISM IS NOT ECONOMIC DETERMINISM

It is possible that you may consider Marx as a proponent of economic determinism or the view that economic conditions determine the development of society. But you will here see how historical materialism is different from economic determinism. Marx recognised that without culture there can be no production possible. For him, mode of production includes social relations of production which are relations of domination

and subordination into which men and women are born or involuntarily enter. The reproduction both of life and of the material means of life cannot be understood without turning to the culture, norms and the rituals of the working people over whom the rulers rule. An understanding of working class culture contributes to an understanding of the mode of production.

Class is a category that describes people in relationships over time, and the ways in which they become conscious of these relationships. It also describes the ways in which they separate, unite, enter into struggle, form institutions and transmit values in class ways. Class is an 'economic' and also a 'cultural' formation. It is impossible to reduce class into a pure economic category.

6.4 CONTRIBUTION OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM TO SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

The theory of historical materialism played an essential part in the formation of modern sociology. Marx's ideas had been foreshadowed in the works of earlier thinkers as diverse in other respects as Hegel, Saint-Simon and Adam Ferguson. All of them greatly influenced Marx. He elaborated his conception of the nature of society, and of the appropriate means to study it. He did so in a more precise, and above all more empirical fashion than did his predecessors. He introduced an entirely new element to understand the structure of each society. It was derived from the relations between social classes. These relations were determined by the mode of production. It was this feature of historical materialism which was widely accepted by later sociologists as offering a more promising starting point for exact and realistic investigations of the causes of social change.

Secondly, historical materialism introduced into sociology a new method of inquiry, new concepts, and a number of bold hypotheses to explain the rise, development, and decline of particular forms of society. All of these came to exercise, in the later decades of the nineteenth century, a profound and extensive influence upon the writings of sociologists.

Thirdly, originality of historical materialism was in its immense effort to synthesise in a critical way, the entire legacy of social knowledge since Aristotle. Marx's purpose was to achieve a better understanding of the conditions of human development. With this understanding he tried to accelerate the actual process by which mankind was moving toward an association, in which the free development of each was the condition for the free development of all. The desired system would be based upon rational planning, cooperative production, and equality of distribution and most important, liberated from all forms of political and social exploitation.

Lastly, historical materialism not only provides a method to understand the existing social reality; it is a method to understand the existence of other methods. It is a persistent critique of the aims and methods of social sciences.

Check Your Progress 2

i) Define, in three lines, relations of production and forces of production.

.....

ii) List, in three lines, the various components of the superstructure.

.....

iii) Define state. Does it belong to

- a) infrastructure or
- b) superstructure?

6.5 LET US SUM UP

In summing up what you learnt in Unit 6 of Block 2, you may state the following three points.

- 1) Historical materialism is a materialist interpretation of social, cultural and political phenomena. It propounds that social institutions and related values are determined by the mode of production processes rather than ideas in the explanation of history. However, the word ‘determined’, in the Marxian sense, refers to determination in the last analysis and should not be taken in an absolute sense.
- 2) Historical materialism is a dialectical theory of human progress. It regards history as the development of human beings’ efforts to master the forces of nature and, hence, of production. Since all production is carried out within social organisation, history is the succession of changes in social system, the development of human relations geared to productive activity (mode of production) in which the economic system forms the base and all other relationships, institutions, activities, and idea systems are “superstructural”.
- 3) History is progress because human beings’ ability to produce their “forces of production” continually increases. It is regression because in perfecting the forces of production they create more and more complex and oppressive social organisation.

6.6 KEY WORDS

Class A fundamental social group or a tangible collectivity which has the capacity to act as a real social force. It

	is positioned in relation to the (non) ownership of the means of material production.
Class Struggle	Conflict between two antagonistic social classes which is the motive force of history.
Class Interest	The aims, aspirations and assumptions of a social class which are collectively shared by the members.
Class Consciousness	Awareness of the objective class position vis-à-vis others and an awareness of its historic role in the transformation of society.
Forces of Means of Production	Both the materials worked on and the tools and techniques employed in production of material goods. These material-technical aspects should not be confused with social relations of production.
Hume	A. Hume was an agnostic philosopher and believed that any ultimate reality is unknown.
Infrastructure	Metaphor to express the basic theoretical priority of the mode of production in relation to the rest of society. It includes the means of production and relations of production.
Liberal	One who believes in progress, the essential goodness of human beings and autonomy of the individual.
Mode of Production	The actual relationship between the relations of production and the forces of production.
Proletarian	Representative of the lowest socio-economic class of a community
Relations of Production	Social relationships that directly or indirectly arise out of the production of material conditions of life.
Superstructure	Metaphor to represent the social conditions of the existence of the infrastructure. It includes <i>state</i> , schools, religions, institutions, culture, ideas, values and philosophy, etc.

State	A set of institutions and apparatuses that serve as an outpost of the dominant class and further its interests. It enjoys a relative autonomy from the infrastructure and belongs to the superstructure.	Historical Materialism
Spinoza	B. de Spinoza taught that reality is one substance with many attributes of which only thought and extension are understood by the human mind.	
Tocqueville	Alexis de Tocqueville is regarded as a great political thinker of the nineteenth century France. He wrote two major books – (i) <i>Democracy in America</i> and (ii) <i>The Old Regime and the French Revolution</i> . In the first book he gave a portrait of a particular society, American society and in the second book he gave his analysis of a historical event, the French Revolution. Marx was quite influenced by Tocqueville’s ideas of democracy.	

6.7 FURTHER READING

Aron, Raymond. 1965. *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*. Vol. 1, Penguin: Harmondsworth. P. 111-82

Bukharin, N.I. 1926. *Historical Materialism: A System of Sociology*. Allen and Unwin: London

6.8 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) (c)
- ii) (a), (b) & (c)
- iii) (b)

Check Your Progress 2

- i) See Key Words
- ii) State, education, religion, values, ideas and philosophies, etc.
- iii) See Key Words.