



Marx finds that under the façade of ensuring greater good or securing collective interests, the modern state actually engages in perpetuating the interest of the dominant class. This continuous tension between the idea of universality and particularistic interests of civil society is the characteristic feature of the modern state.

However, various scholars have taken a critical view of Marxist theory of state on the following grounds.

1. **Liberal view of state** argues that state is an institution of class-reconciliation. It is an autonomous sphere where vested interests in society play out against each other and the state acts as an arbitrator of the disputes.
2. Neo-Marxist thinkers such as **Gramsci, Althusser and Poulantzas** have stressed that the state does not automatically become an instrument of class rule but can have relative autonomy. A relatively autonomous state can develop in a society where the warring classes have reached equilibrium. In such modern states, the working class and masses are vocal and assertive, thus the state is bound to cater to their issues, hence the state rises above the self-interests of the particularistic groups.
3. With the concept of the Welfare state, it has taken a wider role of inclusive development and thus is above the particularistic self-interests.
4. With the development of Democratic Polity, the state has established institutions for promoting socialism and achieving an egalitarian order in society.
5. The Marxist state is based on **economic determinism** which negates the other spheres of social, cultural and political domain where the role of society is very important.

The Marxist state is intended to do away with the class differences present in society today and his point of view is rather pragmatic. He bats for a change in society for establishing the ownership of the masses (Communism).

(b) Feminist view of Democracy

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Approach:

- ❖ Discuss how liberal feminists view affirmative action as an instrument of inclusivity.
- ❖ Contrast the different views, and give solutions.

Answer: The Liberal Theorists see **Family as a part of the private sphere** and hence kept out of politics. Family does not find any mention in the process of democratization. Division of Labour in the Family is unequal because the female contribution (household work, child rearing etc.) is largely ignored.

Thus, they emphasize that **“Personal is Political”**, and hence it should be given its due. Their contribution not being counted makes them isolated from the sphere of state.

Feminists opine that to ensure substantive equality, the measure need to be of distinctive kind. They need to incorporate the notion of difference. Democratic theory sees equality as the removal of differences, so it can be inferred that formal equality recognizes no difference among men and women.

Socio economic equality understands difference as a disadvantage and seeks to remove them, but it is to be understood that the very concept of disadvantage has been fixed to a metric that is male in nature. For them, enforcing male norms to understand women's perspectives is unjust.

Democracy seeks to undertake participation of every individual and any form of exclusion would amount to a flawed democratic setup.

Gendered Division of Labour and Power

The Liberal and radical feminists both see state as an institution of patriarchy. The Liberals are however of the view of affirmative action to make democracy inclusive and functional. They see the state to be an institution of neutrality. **Iris Marin Young** is the scholar of liberal school who seeks affirmative action from the state.

In the domain of Power, the meager of participation of women throws light on the poor plight of their representation. Indian parliament for example, has around 12 % female members only. Thus, they (Liberal feminists) demand state intervention to ensure greater representation in a democratic set up. The provision of minimum 33% reservation in India's local self-bodies through 73rd and 74th amendment tries to bring women in the domain of power. However, the women representatives have been found to be acting in pseudo capacities. The concept of **Mukhiya Pati or Pradhan Pati** is found to be practiced in the rural setups. The recent case of an Indian medical student who had won local body election but was studying medicine in Ukraine and being represented in the local body by her father throws light on this issue of flawed representation of women.



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