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# Political Science & International Relations Crash Course

*Lecture - 17*

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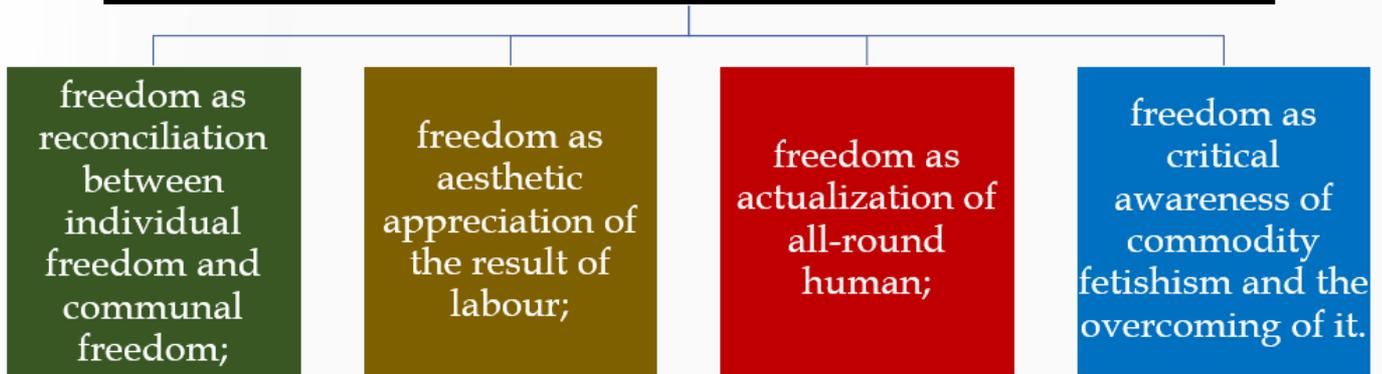
1) Differentiate between freedom and liberty. Discuss Marx's notion of freedom. [2017-15m]



## Liberty And Freedom

- Liberty in liberal conception emphasises on being left alone i.e freedom from external constraints such as the State. Freedom on the other hand includes an internal construct i.e liberation from conflict, feelings of alienation, etc.
- Both freedom and liberty are used interchangeably, however, in political theory, the former is associated with Marxist thinking while the latter is associated with liberal philosophy.
- In differentiating between liberty and freedom Marx underlines how cornerstones of liberalism, liberal rights and ideas of justice are premised on the idea that each of us needs protection from other human beings who are a threat to our liberty and security. On the other hand, real freedom is to be found positively in our relations with other people. It is to be found in human community, not in isolation.
- “Marxism is a theory of liberation or it is nothing” R. Dunayevskaya held in *Marxism and Freedom.*

## Marx's concept of freedom can be understood in four broad dimensions:



- Marx criticizes liberal concept of freedom for its reductionistic- economic understanding of human beings. Marx argued that liberty is a bourgeois concept based on the individualistic nature of man. He acknowledged that capitalist society gives civil-political equality but not socio economic. Thus, freedom in bourgeois society is false consciousness and actually results in alienation.
- Freedom as a social force-In his **Economic and Philosophic Manuscript,1844** he presented a humanist basis of freedom. Marx tried to reconcile individual freedom and communal freedom.
  - According to him real freedom is a social condition. It is freedom from necessities. He called out freedom as removal of obstacles in human emancipation.
- Workers discover their thoughts, energies and emotions in the products. Thus, human beings can achieve freedom if they discover the world of their own spirit (*Geist*) in the final result of their productive activities.
- Freedom as self-creativity-Secondly, for Marx, labour is not a passive and negative, but “a liberating activity”, so he defined freedom as self-creativity. However, in the capitalist system, creativity degenerates into alienated labour which hampers realisation of freedom.
- Thirdly, Marx says that freedom in the arena of material production can be achieved through freely associated producers' collective and rational control of nature with the minimum expenditure of human mental physical energy and the maximum satisfaction of human needs.
- Freedom as self-realisation-Lastly, freedom also meant self-realisation of the fact that private capital has alienated the worker as well as the capitalist at four different levels- from product, production process, from other individuals and own self.

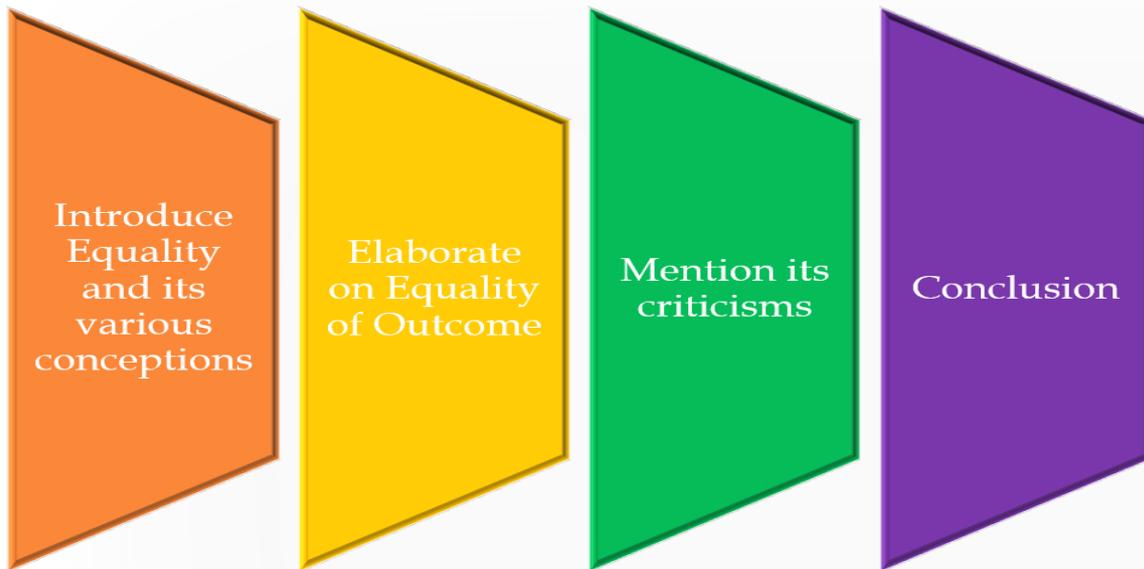
### How To Achieve Freedom?

- To achieve freedom Marx argued for abolition of private property on the one hand and the communistic regulation of production on the other hand. For this, “the process of material production should be managed by freely associated men, and stands under their conscious and planned control.”
- In the **Critique of the Gotha Program**, Marx also suggested to abolish the institution of the wage-labour as a slavery system to achieve human freedom.
- Genuine freedom can be acquired only in the condition in which we can develop human potential as an end in itself. For this, he suggests that we should reduce the working days. This reduction of labour time is a primary condition of the development of human powers.

Therefore, for Marx, the concept of freedom argues A. Walicki is rooted in the idea of freedom as unfettered self-realization, the fullest possible development of the personality. The ideal of freedom, that is, demands not only minimizing external constraints, but also creating optimal conditions for everyone’s fullest personal development.

### Conclusion

- Walicki argues that Marxist idea of freedom is extremely relevant as Marx replaced the idea of individual freedom safeguarded by law with an idea of the emancipation of humanity, conceived as collective salvation in history.
- In today’s world ridden by problems of pandemic and its fallouts like economic slowdown, heightened inflation, increasing inequalities between the rich and poor across the world (T. Picketty) and issues of violence against the marginalised and oppressed, Marx’s idea of freedom and humanism becomes even more important.



## Introduction

- Equality is a sovereign virtue. It is a concept of modern times linked with human dignity. ← Dworkin
- There are different notions of equality- essentially contested concept.
  - Equality before law → It is a legalistic concept which advocates that in front of law, everyone should be treated equally .
  - Equality of opportunity, or Proportional equality: It is an important tenet of Social Liberalism. It advocates that the role of the state is to create equal opportunities for everyone and then it is up to them how they make use of the situation thus created. R.H Tawney criticised equality of opportunity as ‘tadpole’s philosophy’
  - Equality of outcomes → It is a concept proposed by Marxists or radical egalitarians. *In his Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx declares that in the final phase of communism, society would be able to inscribe on its banner: ‘From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs. This leads us to the transition from formal to substantive equality, from negative to positive equality, from static to dynamic equality.

## Equality Of Outcomes

- It advocates equal distribution of rewards such as income, wealth and other social goods. It is a substantive and positive notion of equality.
- It postulates the right to equal satisfaction of basic needs, which implies state provision of education, employment as also of essential social services, such as cheap transport, fair price shops, hospitals, community centres, public parks, health resorts, etc.
- It is widely supported by socialists, communists and some anarchists while liberals & conservatives consider this as immoral.

- In **The German Ideology**, Marx seeks to unravel the ideological bind that certain concepts have in a historical period to legitimise the interests of the dominant class.
- All historical epochs provide their own ruling ideas: 'during the time the aristocracy was dominant, the concepts honour, loyalty, etc., were dominant, during the dominance of the bourgeoisie, the concepts freedom, equality, etc.'
- However, Marx criticises these concepts as being hollow and bereft of substance unless accompanied by a communist vision of 'equality of outcome'.
- In the transitional socialist stage, emancipation is not complete but equal access to the means of production is ensured. The distributive principle in operation during the stage is guided by the principle of 'to each according to his work' which eventually turns to equality of outcome during communism.

### Criticism

- The idea of equality of outcome is the most radical and controversial face of egalitarianism. It is a troublesome idea that is extremely difficult to implement as it allots a much wider role to state. This may interfere with liberty and autonomy.
- **People have different talents, abilities. It doesn't mean the talented would have to be handicapped for the slower ones to finish with them.**
- Also Equality of outcome would require a social engineering leading to coercion, discrimination & compromise of liberty.
- This conflict between procedural and substantive equality is sought to be balanced by scholars like Rawls where justice is about rules/procedure that govern a social practice, not the outcome.
- Amartya Sen pioneers the idea that distributional equality should concern itself with equalizing people's capabilities, instead of emphasizing on resources or incomes.
- Michael Walzer in his book 'Spheres of Justice' gives importance to the idea of 'complex equality'. Walzer argues that there should not be a single most important metric of equality – welfare, resources or capability etc.
- Proponents of this approach call for ***differential treatment through affirmative action [positive discrimination] for correction of injustice and strengthening democracy.*** For example Reservation in India and Quota system in USA.



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