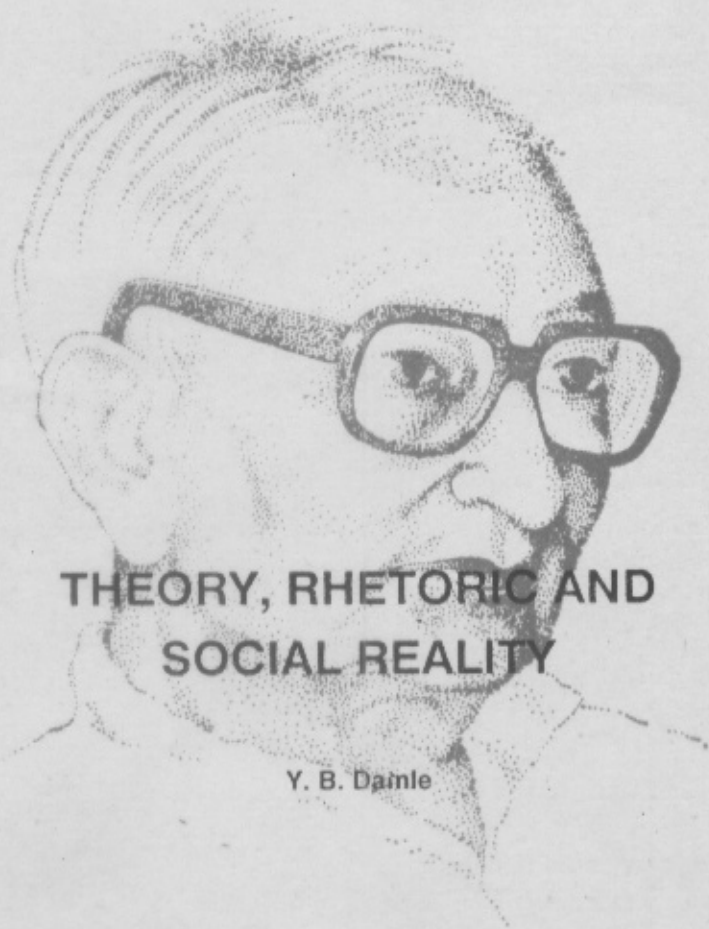


I.P. Desai Memorial Lecture : 7



**THEORY, RHETORIC AND
SOCIAL REALITY**

Y. B. Damle

**CENTRE FOR SOCIAL STUDIES
SURAT.**

PREFACE

The Centre for Social Studies has created an endowment fund to honour late Prof. I.P. Desai, the founder-Director of the Centre. As part of the programme, we have instituted the I.P. Desai Memorial Lecture series. Prof. Y.B. Damle delivered the seventh lecture on 'Theory, Rhetoric and Social Reality'. It gives us great pleasure to make available his lecture to a wider academic community.

We are grateful to Prof. Damle for having readily responded to our invitation to deliver the lecture. I must thank my colleagues Sudhir Chandra for editing the text, Marzia Cutpiecewala for looking after the publication and K.M. Bhavsar for preparing typeset.

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THEORY, RHETORIC AND SOCIAL REALITY

Y. B. Damle

A great deal has been discussed and written about crisis in Sociology. Various explanations and points of view have been expressed either to accept that there is indeed an inherent crisis in the discipline or to suggest that crisis in Sociology is but only a reflection of the crisis in the wider society. (Tom Bottomore, p. 5) Even if one were not to opt for one position or the other, it would certainly be useful to realise that 'Sciencing' in respect of social reality is being more and more questioned. While Sociology as a discipline emerged in response to the myriad problems faced by industrial and urban society, i.e., transition from status to contract, from serfdom to individual liberty, from operation of natural law to rational law etc., peculiarly western experience has been sought to be universalised in terms of theoretical postulates and frameworks. Positivism has left its indelible mark on this endeavour called Social Science. It has been felt that knowledge would necessarily promote the requisite conscience which would be both congenial and efficient.

Without going into the details of the pronouncements of Social Scientists in India, I would just refer to the gap between such pronouncements and social reality in India arising mainly out of an uncritical acceptance of both Theory and Ideology, which developed in a different setting. (Atkinson, p. 283) Of course, we have been warned by various scholars and critics that the basic presumptions of Sociologists, viz., social order, social integration, cohesion etc., would not permit them to have a proper and realistic understanding of social reality, much less their ability to transform reality in the desired direction.

the common person to justify such continuous domination of the Congress Party in general and the clan in particular. All manner of progressive verbiage is cleverly, or not so cleverly, utilised to justify domination in the interests of serving common people. Even more so to exploit them, a very clever use is indeed made of the various segments and divisions prevailing in the society to press the message of do-gooders and saviours of the weaker and exploited sections, be it on account of language or religion or economic circumstances, educational backwardness, and so on.

Such exercise in tokenism and rhetoric has to be very clearly understood in any discussion of the role of ideology. This is necessary to see through the real content of ideology or rather its distorted nature which would not allow any delivering of goods. Parrot-like reproduction of certain expressions does not take one anywhere. It is necessary to go very much beyond the verbal expressions and fearlessly and critically review the actual attainments. The entire apparatus of communication and propaganda which is available to the State has to be examined for understanding the degeneration of ideology into tokenism and rhetoric. The mask provided by tokens and rhetorical expressions has to be exposed and done away with. Whether it is a liberal democracy or a centrally controlled democracy, this aspect has to be clearly and permanently borne in mind. Otherwise one would be treading on thin ice.

Besides, the requisite economic, political, scientific, industrial, technological, educational and socio-cultural development is also indispensable for the implementation of ideology into practice. The operation of deep structural differences and levels would also be an impediment in implementation of any given ideology, however, progressive and radical it may appear.

This raises another problem, that of distinguishing between Macro dimension and Micro dimension which again have a different context for their applicability. Macro ideology is supposed to be relevant and useful, not to say effective, notwithstanding the various kinds of differences operating within a given macro reality. To cite an illustration, in the case of India, the differentiation between the metropolitan, rural and tribal areas has to be taken cognisance of before launching macro-ideology. While accepting Nation as Macro reality, several differences emanating from culture, language, ethnicity as well as differential economic development continuously pose a threat to the Ideology of a Nation. History and geography of a nation have also to be taken due note of.

Liberalism implies political organisation on the basis of equality and freedom. Even as there is a distinction, not to say gap and discrepancy, between formal and substantive rationality, there is a gap between formal and substantive rights which is a major critique of traditional liberalism. Therefore, equality and freedom have to be accompanied by requisite changes in the economic and social organisation. Apart from access to economic and socio-cultural facilities, access to power is equally important. It is felt that a democratic polity would offer opportunity to any citizen to rise to a position of importance in the political sphere. There is hardly any doubt that various ideologies like democracy, welfare State, equality, freedom, and secularism are expected to change the structure of society and, therefore, structure of social relations from within. Although the idea of liberalism is fundamentally individualistic, it has to be supported by the re-ordering of community. To say the least, re-ordering of community means the freedom to choose one's associates. Ideas and ideologies require an ever expanding network of communication because of which they would spread to all and sundry. However, once they spread to all and sundry and affect the consciousness which such spreading creates, a minimum delivering

of goods, promised in the propagation of ideologies, would need to be ensured.

While ideas and ideologies exert influence, the gap between what is communicated tends to be 'inflationary rhetoric, which cannot be backed by arguments, facts or performances'. (Colomy, p. 198) Such a gap reduces, if it does not destroy, the potency of ideologies particularly in respect of being an instrument of innovation and change. The distinction between substance and shadow comes to one's mind. Because the declaration of praiseworthy intentions is not backed by action, the reputation of those who float such slogans and catch-phrases is impaired or destroyed. The working of the political process, particularly in respect of electioneering, acts as a hurdle to the common person's desire to discard such politicians. This happens primarily because of the (a) financial expenditure involved, (b) the support structure which generally comes from dominant groups, and (c) the general gullibility of the electorate.

Various electoral campaigns testify to the shadow fights between various political parties. Even those who espouse certain ideologies outside the realm of political activity are generally not in a position to translate in action ideologies that they stand for. It is common experience that, particularly during electioneering, acid criticisms are levelled at rival political parties and candidates, and highest standards of probity, moral character and capacity to deliver the goods are invoked by those who themselves are no better. During the day-to-day process of administering and providing the promised facilities, various pressures and counter-pressures nullify the prospects of translating ideologies into concrete action. This does not pertain only to inter-party and inter-group political situation. Even within the ruling party, pressures and counter-pressures operate to frustrate pious aims and goals.

Ideologies can be realised through appropriate intervention. But intervention, too, may create more problems than it can solve, and thereby fail to add to the good of people. However, ideological phrases, which captivate those who use them and sometimes also those against or for whom they are used, necessarily result in mere rhetorical expressions. As mentioned earlier, the inflation of ideology through ever expanding communication creates widening gaps between verbal expressions and actual performances. Still such inflation is resorted to in order to persuade the common person that all the required efforts will be made, not that they are being made, so as to rise in the comity of nations which have already progressed and prospered.

It is a commonplace of experience that the present generation is mortgaged for the good of the future generation, which is more often than not questionable. This is so for the simple reason that there are promises galore which are not matched by performance, and therefore, only the present generation gets sacrificed. The vanity of leaders who are at the helm of affairs is sometimes fanned by a coterie of intellectuals who have either coined those phrases or for a vicarious sense of participation in the transformation of society (India) so as to reach certain goals like the creation of welfare State, attainment of economic prosperity, equality, freedom, social justice, secularism, and democracy.

Planning for development has implications for positivist manipulatory action which gives a kind of pleasure as well as power to those who are 'engaged' in such activity. All the same, we know how planning for development is done, by and large, by ignoring the common people for whom such plans of development are professedly made.

After experiencing the shortcomings of formal democracy, realisation has dawned about the importance of democratic decentralisation. However, the paradoxical part of it is that what is democratic decentralisation is defined at the central level and passed on to the State, District and village levels with clear-cut instructions that decisions taken at the Centre about 'Democratic Decentralisation' are to be implemented in toto. The same could be said about policies of industrial, technological and agricultural development, educational programmes, and various reform programmes, with the result that policies and programmes acquire the character of rhetoric. A mere perusal of the publications put out by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting about the achievements of the Government of India in respect of overall transformation of society could bear this out. There is hardly any sphere of life which is not accounted for and for which claims are not made, say from scientific development to cultural development.

Apart from the bureaucratic machinery at the Union and State levels, intellectuals and experts are roped in ostensibly to provide and formulate the relevant ideologies and work out modalities for the implementation of ideologies, policies and programmes so as to lend them a good measure of responsibility, rationality and legitimacy.

Intellectuals and Ideology

The role of intellectuals in the formulation, propagation and championing of ideology can be understood in terms of the fact that 'average man has little or no understanding of his condition and, in fact, he is turned over to small dominant minorities for the responsibility for making decisions.' (Zeitlin, p. 313) Distance between

common masses and those who are capable of thinking, theorising and providing ideology is a familiar phenomenon today. Mannheim suggests that basically intellectuals are not a class and hence have no ideology of their own. They can espouse any ideology, because they have an 'extra-ordinarily refined sense for all the political and social currents around them... but let them take up and identify themselves with someone else's interest - they will know them better, really better, than those for whom these interests are laid down by the nature of things, by their social condition.' (Zeitlin, p. 298). Because of their knowledge they can link up different generations and choose certain ideologies which they think are relevant for the times, thus providing a bond between different generations.

Ideally speaking there should be unity between Theory and Ideology. But neither Theory nor Ideology can be composite wholes when intelligentsia are 'recruited from constantly varying social strata and life situations and their mode of thought are no longer subject (as they were in the Middle Ages) to regulation by a Caste like organisation'. (Zeitlin, p. 303) In this context it would be interesting to inquire into the social background of intellectuals, not in general but with special reference to those who are occupying important positions, formal or otherwise, as party intellectuals, think tanks, experts, and consultants. A classical instance which comes to my mind is the enactment of Dandi March by Rajiv Gandhi to emphasize his continuity with Mahatma Gandhi's perception, analysis, ideology and action, at the instance of an intellectual.

One cannot altogether deny the possibility and prospects of intellectuals being self-serving by playing court to the powers that be. 'Distortions in ideology range all the way from conscious lies to half lies and unwitting discourses; from calculated attempts to dupe others to self-deception.' (Zeitlin, p. 305) That is why interaction

between intellectuals and the proletariat was emphasized by Marx, so that ideology would become a formidable weapon in the hands of proletariat and its spokespersons. It would be interesting to find out the kind of level of such interaction in India.

Whether a comprehensive understanding of different currents and sub-currents forms an ideological position or ideology is coloured by one's special interest is again an important point to consider. This requires time to assess and test various circumstances so as to iron out inconsistencies and of course desire to do so. To the extent an intellectual loses contact with reality his/her ideas may lose relevance. Though it is customary to account for such loss of contact in terms of capitalist bourgeois society, even under a socialist, centrally planned and controlled regime, such a situation is very likely to arise. Bureaucratism undermines democracy because it separates people from the means of power and brings about, in Mannheim's words, 'dominance of small minorities under capitalism as well as communism.' Further, according to Mannheim, small minorities take the form which creative minorities controlling societies choose to give them.' (Zeitlin, p. 213). This needs empirical verification.

One has to bear in mind the divergence between such ideal types and the reigning reality. There is hardly any doubt that there are significant differences of structural levels which put forward different images of reality that people encounter in their day-to-day life.

We must also reflect upon the grandiose generalisations that are made about both social analysis and relevant ideology either to give it certain directions or to change it. In the case of India, its variegated nature and the mind boggling differences of space and time would necessarily prompt one to question the generalisability of

any theory and the attendant ideology which is employed to change the situation. That is why, ideological pronouncements might, and do, assume the character of a shibboleth.

Mannheim has very rightly stressed that practice or action is a test of various truth. He further stresses that 'ethical attitude is invalid if it is oriented as reference to norms with which action in a given historical setting, even with the best of intention, cannot comply.' (Karl Mannheim, p. 84) Further, 'theory... is wrong if in a given practical situation it uses concepts and categories which, if taken seriously, would prevent man from adjusting himself at that historical stage.' (Karl Mannheim, p. 85)

Thus, like rationality, formal ideology has to be checked by understanding substantial ideology. Intellectuals can have neither analytical and theoretical rigour nor realistic understanding and comprehension of ideology, if they lose touch with existential reality. In this context it is important to enquire into the position occupied by intellectuals. More often than not, in their quest for generalising (theoretically) and in their enthusiasm, not to say impatience, to espouse certain ideologies, intellectuals may go beyond their brief and capacity for the simple reason that they choose to operate at the macro level without understanding the micro reality.

Further, concepts and definitions of ideology tend to be removed from reality because of certain biases of which intellectuals may not be conscious. That is why an orchestrated picture of inter-related ideologies is presented, e.g. democracy, secularism, rationality, freedom, social justice, equality, and so on. While it may be convenient to postulate a structural coherence between these values or ideologies, in their actual operation one may not be consistent with the other, thereby raising so many problems.

Formal definitions of democracy, secularism, rationality and so on, do not necessarily reflect the existential reality because of the fact of people's perceptions and practice being guided by an array of interests. Various theoretical concepts also suffer from the same deficiency. Take, for instance, the concept of development. It is well-known as to how development of a particular kind is both intended and regarded as sacrosanct and any understanding of that model is regarded as a threat to development ideology. One of the post-positivist intellectual trends in Sociology has been to question this either/or attitude and substitute it by sensitivity and appreciation of variegatedness of social mechanisms, groupings and reality. On the other hand, no matter how the rule of thumb is accepted and practised by intellectuals, they would be departing from reality. Therefore, at what level intellectuals operate is very important and what brief, and if so, whose brief they hold, is equally important. Catch-phrases do not take anyone anywhere.

Some Ideologies and Rhetoric by which the Present Discourse is Characterised and the Existing Reality

The foregoing discussion must have made it clear that any divergence between theory and ideology would give rise to either erroneous theorising or erroneous ideologising. To start with, one can examine the concept and practice of democracy. In recommending and praising the ideology of democracy, what is generally forgotten is the gap between formal democracy and substantive democracy, for the simple reason that the formal aspect of democracy may be implemented, e.g., elections to various bodies, choosing of 'people's' representatives which is again supposed to be both free and fair. However, even this aspect of democracy is tampered with from time to time. Moreover, the concept of democracy gets circumscribed by

tiers of loyalty which one subscribes to, may be family, clan, caste, language, region, religion, class, and so on. The manner in which the representative character of the elected body is impaired by shadow representatives is well-known. So is the practice of choosing a leader unanimously - and here general unanimity depends on advice, suggestion and order from above - cf. the choice of a Chief Minister or Mayor of Municipal Corporation.

Equality is again modified so as to emphasize equality basically within one's primordial group. Otherwise the general notion of equality does not obtain. This may be so due to various considerations and behaviour such as kinship, caste, land-holdings, years of residence and traditional authority and power, income, political linkages. If one goes to any village, people volunteer to proclaim, not to say protest, their faith in equality. Many intellectuals tend to repeat the 'official' definition of secularism, which starts with the same treatment to various 'religions', but generally means religious minorities and that also from the point of view of 'votes'. On the one hand, cultural pluralism is acceptable and accepted while special facilities on the basis of religion are not acceptable. As far as the rural division of labour is concerned, there is a tacit expectation that everyone would perform their duties and functions according to the traditional dispensation, although such dispensation is largely economic in its content, and, therefore, a secular manifestation, though the word is hardly ever used.

The substantive reality in respect of Social Justice also departs from the formal definition. As a matter of fact, in Sociology in particular, logical rationality in the proper sense of the term is extremely difficult to attain. Development is construed as the availability of resources, as a result of which individuals and groups, which have so far been denied access to these, would be entitled to

get such resources. On the other hand, the prevailing structure of power renders very difficult, if it does not frustrate, the process of making such resources available. Even such a thing as citizen's participation, which is linked with functioning of a democratic order, is in reality non-existent (a) because of traditions of dependence on the government, and (b) because of structural hurdles.

Freedom of association, as ideology, is not implemented in practice due to various reasons. On the one hand, verbal acceptance of formal ideology due to the inflation of communication results in turning these ideologies into mere rhetorical expressions. There is hardly any doubt that along with the package of sociological theory, which essentially developed in the West in response to the changing situation and the challenge which it put forward, in India we have uncritically accepted these theoretical propositions. Even more so, ideological under-pinnings of this theory also seem to permeate, not to say dominate, our thinking.

People's perceptions, experience and practices as well as their rational or ideological convictions, may not be in conformity with the theoretical and ideological premises with which we start. Therefore, apart from ending up with inadequate and inefficient theory we also end up with rhetoric. Reference must be made to ritualism in the field of ideology too, not to say the discrepancy between fashionable ideology and people's practices. To understand this properly, content analysis of intellectuals' pronouncements and writings and the positions that they hold in terms of the office they occupy, the various privileges they enjoy and also their own ideological convictions - which may themselves be the result of their orientation to certain models which are essentially non-Indian - has to be made so as to examine this problem substantively.

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This raises additional problems: What is the desired direction and whose desires are implicit or explicit? It has been commented that for want of correct appraisal of social reality, any attempt to venture and suggest solutions of any kind would be nearly impossible. Undue concern with 'system' has resulted in the neglect of the individual and the ordinary individual's quest for acquiring freedom from the constraints of the system. In a way, this has resulted in the paradox accepted by both Marx and Parsons, viz., "How is conflict possible when man is rational and co-operative or how is order possible when man is basically destructive and competitive?" (Atkinson, p. 109) 'Life, choice and individuality stare modern sociologists in the face, but he makes nonsense of them by reducing them by means of his concepts, definitions and explanations to the dull, grey and lifeless'. (Atkinson, p. 283) If Sociologists were to be completely engaged in the search and explanations of system, they would not be in a position to appreciate the continuous efforts made by the common man to challenge a system and change it from within.

Rooting in liberalism has in a way chalked out the path for social sciences in general and for Sociology in particular. That is why liberal values like rationality, individualism, freedom, justice, and equality have formed the value pre-suppositions. Moreover, it is contended that every society must necessarily progress in the direction of realising these values sooner or later; otherwise they would remain backward and reactionary. While subscribing to the liberal doctrine, such a formulation is necessarily positivist and dogmatic for the simple reason that the path of transformation of non-liberal societies into liberal societies is chalked out by 'others', no matter whether it is expressed in Comtean Law of three stages or Rostow's stages of economic growth.

Just to illustrate the point, it has been aptly and adequately shown that Marx, whose name is usually equated with the conflict school, was also an ardent champion of liberalism and followed the same tradition of thinking. Of course, since he was engaged in the diagnostic analysis of the evil features of capitalism, Marx was extremely keen about the creation of an alternate system which would ensure a humane society congenial to the emancipation of individual from unnecessary constraints and offering the requisite facilities for his/her flowering and development. In a way, for Marx it was mainly a question of substituting one system by another and, to that extent, volition, life, choice and individuality would also be constrained. While positivism was thus tempered by the ideology of liberalism, it should be realised that theory itself does not and cannot programme reality.

Before discussing recent developments in neo-functionalism and neo-Marxism, it would not be out of place to enquire into the vicissitudes of liberalism in social science theory in general and Sociology in particular. It should also be pointed out that liberalism and revolutionary thought have also to be looked at simultaneously so as to appreciate the important deficiencies in the concept of theory and ideology of liberalism. Similarly, too much of ideological orthodoxy in Marxism as well results in intellectual petrification. Nevertheless, it has to be accepted that sociological theory as an important part of social science theory does not confine itself to purely empirical observations. It concerns itself also with 'non-empirical assumptions of a political, moral, metaphysical and epistemological nature'. (Seidman, p. 6)

'Combination of emerging secular world view and revolutions in political, social and economic orders in the eighteenth century represents the originating context of European Social Theory.'

(Seidman, p. 7) Modern social theory emerged in the context of triumph of secularism. 'The materialism, rationalism, progressivism and utopian and critical orientation of Marx is a continuation of the analytical project of the enlightenment and therefore a fundamental departure from the main lines of development of the sociological tradition.' (Seidman, p. 8) Marxian Sociology stands for the integration of materialism and idealism, individualism and holism, rationalism and historicism, and science and critique.

Marx has been criticized for his latent positivism and instrumentalism as well as economism. However, 'Marx and the classical sociology of Durkheim and Weber sought to synthesise liberalism and revolution.' (Seidman, p. 12) The ideological core of liberalism which Marx wanted to preserve consisted of the doctrine of autonomy and democracy. The absence of democratic tradition in Germany made Weber, Tonnies and Simmel aware of the shortcomings of liberalism and they adopted a positive attitude towards Marxism. 'Whereas the Anglo-American social theory emerged as a part of the triumph of liberal civilization, European social theory was elaborated in the context of the failure of liberalism and developed, but in part, as its critique.' (Seidman, p. 13) 'The continued strength of the Church, the landed aristocracy, hierarchy and the Statist tradition and an educated and cultural elite rooted in aristocratic values, and the related persistence of oppositional ideologies resulted in a weak and defensive liberal tradition.' (Siedman, p. 13)

It was very necessary to steer clear of this basic difference and Marx, Durkheim and Weber proceeded from a two-sided perception based on the belief that 'Liberal society is a progressive movement in western history to the extent that it articulates the idea of individual

freedom and creates conditions of its realisation.' (Seidman, p. 14) This is not to suggest that they were unaware of the deficiencies in liberalism such as anomie, alienation and reification. Yet liberalism stood for resisting State intervention and domination and preached a doctrine of laissez faire which meant reconstruction of political rights to the propertied or educated class. That is why a critique of such liberalism is necessary. This, as we shall point out, is reflected in neo-functionalism.

It was necessary to transcend liberalism which contains in its womb social, economic and political domination of a certain class of people; thereby vitiating and making nonsense of the very concept and ideology of liberalism. Marx, Durkheim and Weber thus represent serious effort of 'liberal reconstruction and transcendence.' (Seidman, p. 18) It should be pointed out that revolution was looked upon as a vehicle of democracy. While Weber and Durkheim rejected Marxism or revolutionary resolution to the dilemma of liberalism, they clearly understood that 'prospects' of liberal civilization depended on the formation of new social and ideological alliance between the progressive middle classes and the working classes, between liberalism and revolution.' (Seidman, p. 277) Formal structures of democracy are, therefore, not of much avail and the deterioration of revolution in central-Statist oligarchic democracy would certainly spell disaster. That is why, the either or position required modification. In a way, such a realisation had important theoretical and ideological implications.

Changing Character of Sociological Theory

In a way, the problems faced by Marx and Parsons, who are generally branded as the arch types of conflict theory or cohesion

theory, point in the direction of necessity of revising theoretical approaches and propositions from time to time. Even more so, the urgent need to establish a measure of correspondence between theorising and reality has also necessitated continuous critical examination and reformulation. While it is true that in social sciences in general and in Sociology in particular it is not possible to look for logical causality, one can hope to work out different implications, large or small, between two different events (variables). Methodologically speaking, attempts to establish complete causality would be unrealistic. All the same, such efforts reflect the acceptance of quantifying techniques, measurement, quest for precision, prediction, and so on.

Attempts to universalise propositions which are relevant in a specific historical experience, have come to nought, and yet such attempts are continuously under way. There is a lurking, persistent impact of positivist approach which is clearly reflected in linear propositions that try to look for social reality in terms of a programmed path of social evolution, if not development.

Dissatisfaction with the linear approach and also with functionalism or rather structural functionalism gave rise to what is labelled as neo-functionalism which tries to dull the edges of frontal criticism against its tenets by providing room for revision and also for accepting the importance of structural variations and variabilities as far as different types of social systems are concerned. In a way Atkinson's suggestion about the kaleidoscopic nature of social reality has been rightly appreciated and conceded.

In this context, failure to examine the role of concrete groups and social processes involved in change and in the undue neglect of

power and conflict is well taken. Likewise, the impingement of universally pacified (unduly) citizenry is also noted, because nation-state, society is more or less an accepted axiom. This is not to suggest that Marxism, which is generally pitted against functionalism, has not invited criticism. In fact, sociological theory lies somewhere between neo-functionalism and neo-Marxism. Of course, as Atkinson says, the consensus between Marx, Weber and Parsons generally escapes the attention of scholars. He, however, avers that such consensus has frightening consequences for Sociology, because the supreme emphasis on system in these statements has led to the neglect of the ordinary man following their emphasis on the concept of 'Sociological Man'. Further, the political and industrial oligarchies and the pacified citizenry reflect an inherent and fundamental asymmetry in society, and the major problem confronting various societies is how to undo this. This is precisely why continuous efforts to withstand the pressures of such oligarchies are very essential. And such efforts necessitate ideology.

Post-positivist conception of science requires inclusion of the ideological realm into our idea of science. 'In the process of developing explanations of human behaviour, social science projects images of self, society and world, and builds into its theoretical Gestalt assumptions of a moral, political and metaphysical nature.' (Seidman, p. 296) This does not mean that ideological stand remains a constant for the simple reason that ideology functions in a configuration which is variable. Therefore, the ideological content of social science in general and Sociology in particular need not make it a static entity. On the other hand, various permutations and combinations of the actual practice of a given ideology would encourage, necessitate and ensure a dynamic study of social systems. It is here again that kaleidoscopic analogy has to be given serious thought. Ideology provides a source of innovative changes.

Sociological theory tries to encompass the global dimension so that it can come out with some general propositions. At the same time, one has to remember that the working of social and political environment has ramifications for formulations in theory. Theoretical enterprise has thus to take into account the dimensions of space and time so as to raise questions which are epistemological and also methodological. The linkage between epistemology and methodology is so intimate that the very nature and scope of social theory is affected by epistemology and facilitated by advances in methodological expertise.

In order to put forward theoretical propositions certain constants have to be assumed, at least in the short run. The ideological stance of Sociology results in elaboration and proliferation. Theoretical conviction sometimes puts limits on the appraisal of empirical reality, because the empirical reality is sought to be put into theoretical pigeon-holes. This in itself becomes an ideological preoccupation.

Further, sociological theory is concerned with the efforts made for the transformation of society to attain certain ideals and goals. That is why it has to be informed by sensitivity to what is happening around. In this sense, it cannot be oblivious of changes, movements and even revolutions. It is not enough to subscribe to certain ideals and values. A social scientist needs must critically analyse whether the values espoused by her/him or by a given society are actually implemented.

The functioning of organisations, mechanisms and structures like various kinds of oligarchies put serious impediments in the implementation of ideologies. There is no denying the very important

linkage of theory and research programmes which would enrich the theory and make it much more relevant and realistic. This is reflected in recent developments in cultural sociology where an implicit relationship between culture and society is questioned and the way in which culture itself is put through the sieve of structural arrangements - political and economic.

Similarly, in accounting for social change, employing the concept of differentiation, relevance of power and conflict has been taken into account, so that instead of harping on equilibrium in a social order, discontinuities of social order are emphasized. Studies in professions and inequality also pinpoint the neglect of inequality because of mystification of the role of professional expert which has only facilitated professional monopoly, to the detriment of professional responsibility. Professions are linked to a system of stratification and as such result in bringing about tension between such a monopoly of rewards and ideology of equality. Study of exercise of power again would require revisions of the study of the rule of law. Similarly, challenge to the existing theory of modernisation has also brought out material which questions the progression of societies from traditional to modern.

In the event of ideologies being implemented due to various kinds of structural constraints, within a nation and in the international sphere, there is a danger of ideologies deteriorating into rhetoric. In his theory of colonisation of the life world, Habermas asserts: 'that the systems of capitalism, bureaucracy and the law which are borne out of the life world by the process of differentiation, then go on to seize control over it, turning it into their colony and hence subjecting the last vestiges of communicative understanding to the logic of money power and law.' (Colomy, pp. 56-57)

Ultimately it comes to the problem of auditing of performance. Working of political process puts so much power in the hands of some that performance is relegated to a subordinate position. Further, extending the concept of charisma into sheer popularity minus any evidence of extraordinary ability and capacity can subvert ideology into rhetoric. The development of media and its influence on the common person has also posed certain problems. Because of manipulation of media, verification of actual action and performance gets neglected.

Sheer complexity of urbanisation makes for a passive citizenry which is either not aware of the implications of concrete action of a given ideology or indifferent because of the lack of correspondence between promises (informed by ideology) and performance. Moreover, acceptance of overall responsibility for taking care of the welfare of the State helps in providing a mask for non-performance. As we know, there are several pronouncements with regard to generating economic prosperity for all, ensuring social justice to the deprived and the disprivileged. Freedom, individual liberty, removal of all kinds of sources of discrimination, etc., are not translated into practice, or rather cannot be so translated. They acquire, consequently, the status of mere verbiage and tokens to be bandied about.

Ideology and Social Theory

Sociology as an intellectual discipline emerged in order to come to terms with the problems faced by industrial society and particularly the problems of disjunction between social organisation and demands of economic and political domination. There is no doubt that Sociology and Sociologists had to address themselves to the problems of transition from feudalism to democracy where 'the

feudal conception of a natural distinction between commoner and aristocrat was replaced by the popular ideals of democracy and equality of rights. Sociology itself was both a part of and response to this shift in human self-conception.' (David Ashley, *Ideology, History and Classical Theory*, p.2, quoted in Bottomore, p. 26)

All the forces which shape modernity have, therefore, provided the major concerns for sociological analysis. Thus, the explorations, discoveries, imperialistic expansion, enlightenment, spread of anti-aristocratic revolution and the industrial revolution have been the basic forces of modernity in western society. Inevitably, with such an agenda, sociological theorising demanded an ability to see social structure and processes as variables and as subjected to analytical comparison. Such ability resulted in linear reasoning and in categorisation of societies as modern and traditional, developed and undeveloped, and so on. Developing a kind of complacent world-view, which was used to explain and legitimize differentiation as well as domination between different societies, such ideology invited sharp criticism.

The concept of ideology has positive as well as negative connotations. On the positive side, ideology is an attempt to make political society meaningful and legitimate. On the negative side it places limits on what can be thought of. Without entering into a detailed discussion of ideology, it can be stated that ideology can be provisionally defined as 'beliefs, attitudes and opinions which form a set, whether tightly or loosely related.' (Penguin Dictionary, p. 118)

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Ultimately it comes to the problem of auditing of performance. Working of political process puts so much power in the hands of some that performance is relegated to a subordinate position. Further, extending the concept of charisma into sheer popularity minus any evidence of extraordinary ability and capacity can subvert ideology into rhetoric. The development of media and its influence on the common person has also posed certain problems. Because of manipulation of media, verification of actual action and performance gets neglected.

Sheer complexity of urbanisation makes for a passive citizenry which is either not aware of the implications of concrete action of a given ideology or indifferent because of the lack of correspondence between promises (informed by ideology) and performance. Moreover, acceptance of overall responsibility for taking care of the welfare of the State helps in providing a mask for non-performance. As we know, there are several pronouncements with regard to generating economic prosperity for all, ensuring social justice to the deprived and the disprivileged. Freedom, individual liberty, removal of all kinds of sources of discrimination, etc., are not translated into practice, or rather cannot be so translated. They acquire, consequently, the status of mere verbiage and tokens to be bandied about.

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distortion on which Marx waxed eloquently. Therefore, it has been suggested that ideology should not be seen only as an intellectual product but also as comprising ideas of ordinary men and women. Further, ideology should be understood in terms of people's practices rather than as mere intellectual constructs. In fact, such neglect of common people's perception, understanding and practices can create difficulties for a correct analysis of the impact and effectivity of 'ideologies'.

Human history has brought up again and again the problem arising out of confusing political authority with moral authority of which Social Scientists are also guilty. The question arises, therefore, as to who shapes and defines ideologies, not to say who imposes them? Of course, the role of media in this context cannot be understated because of the tremendous power of persuasion and propaganda as a result of which such ideologies get accepted by the common person.

Various dimensions of ideology find expression in the discussion of ideology, such as rationality of ideology, enlightening or reassuring ideology, ideology in the service of interests, appeal to powerful psychological states, common action of community, values and ideologies, false consciousness and true consciousness, action of ideologies, etc. These dimensions indicate that ideology can be group specific or based on power or be reformist and revolutionary or even reactionary and conservative.

Ideologies are also vehicles of introduction of new values with which we are mainly concerned. Thus, such values as democracy, justice, equality, rationality, secularism, individualism have been the subject matter of ideology in general. Besides, the propagation of new

values is a fact of human history, although with what results is a matter for serious consideration and discussion.

Introduction of new values has deep-seated implications for important structural changes within a given system. In fact, the placid and relatively unchanging relationship between the different sub-systems of society is given a jolt which may not be, and generally is not, properly appreciated. Change itself becomes a major, if not dominating, value which tries to ride roughshod over people. This can be ascribed partly to the lack of ability mentioned above as well as to the demand for hastening the process of change and development so as to compare favourably with 'modern and developed societies'. Such concern actuates both men of action (state, government, bureaucracy) as well as intellectuals.

Without going into the details of the under-pinnings of ideology in respect of social theory in general and Sociology in particular, it should be clear that both the definition of ideology and its being circumscribed by the system (social, economic, political, technological, scientific etc.) lend a different meaning to ideology. It would, indeed, be difficult to think of ideology as a given fixed entity for the simple reason that what is made of ideology is very important.

On the one hand, ideology is used to legitimise status-quo while on the other hand it is invoked for promoting change and innovation. Much would depend on who controls ideology and the mechanisms of its control. There is hardly any doubt that in the hands of clever, manipulating and self-serving political rulers, ideology can become counter-productive. Moreover, the utilization of various media also facilitates the spread of ideology to people who have probably had not much to do with the propagated ideology in any

sense of the term, although they are influenced by it for sure. It is customary to regard intellectuals as the originators of ideology - both conformists and radicals - without properly appreciating the possibility of intellectuals themselves being used to promote a certain ideology in favour of certain vested interests stemming from economy, polity, socio-cultural dominance, etc.

Comte had expected Sociology to provide a secular religion. Sociology today is looked upon as a secular ideology. That is why those who take themselves seriously not only subscribe to this view but also allow themselves to be 'used' wittingly or unwittingly, consciously or unconsciously, for the propagation of such a view.

Marx saw how linkages of various vested interests and structures promote false consciousness amongst those who really stand to suffer as a result of the working of such arrangements. His expose of it stimulated such men of thought as Weber and Durkheim to carefully look at this phenomenon. Thus his intellectual exercise led Marx to stress the supreme importance of democratic ideology; while Weber and Durkheim felt driven by their critique of classical doctrine of liberalism - as enshrined in the delineation of the concept of natural law and utilitarianism as practised - to emphasize the importance of social justice and democracy.

There is hardly any doubt that the development of Sociology and social theory cannot be properly understood without taking ideological under-pinnings into account. However, subscribing to any ideology dogmatically, irrespective of the situation, would be detrimental both to such theory and also to its practice. In the history of social theory and western societies in particular, we find how various ideologies are challenged and various world-views are also

challenged from time to time. Thus, the inevitability of progress as a concept and ideology has since long been challenged. Similarly, the ideology of liberalism has also been questioned because of its structural under-pinnings. It is, indeed, a commonplace of the science of economics, as it stands now, that the philosophy and ideology of liberalism stems from definite economic environment and vested interests. Likewise, the supremacy of science and technology in its ideological form has also been seriously questioned. Even a reading of the novels of Charles Dickens and H.G. Wells and others testifies to this.

'Democracy, economic progress, modernisation, secularism, and so on, tend to become 'tokens' which are rhetorical symbols rather than elaborated arguments. They imply a body of persuasive discourse that lurks in the background'. (Colomy, p. 22) Various political campaigns reflect an array of rhetorical tokens centred around an amalgamating vision of the new freedom. It is in this context that 'Mayhew criticizes the market of influence which can only be countered 'through the creation of non-partisan voluntary associations empowered to question candidates about crucial issues in public forums requiring dialogue between aspirants for office.' (Colomy, p. 23) Electioneering by candidates for acquiring decisive posts is only a beginning of the market of influence. Much more insidious is the entire political and administrative process, through which the influence is consolidated so as to acquire a relatively permanent domination.

In this context, one cannot but think of the monopoly of power enjoyed by the Congress Party more or less in an unbroken manner since independence, and even more so the domination of a particular clan. Various ideological tokens and rhetorics are brought to bear on