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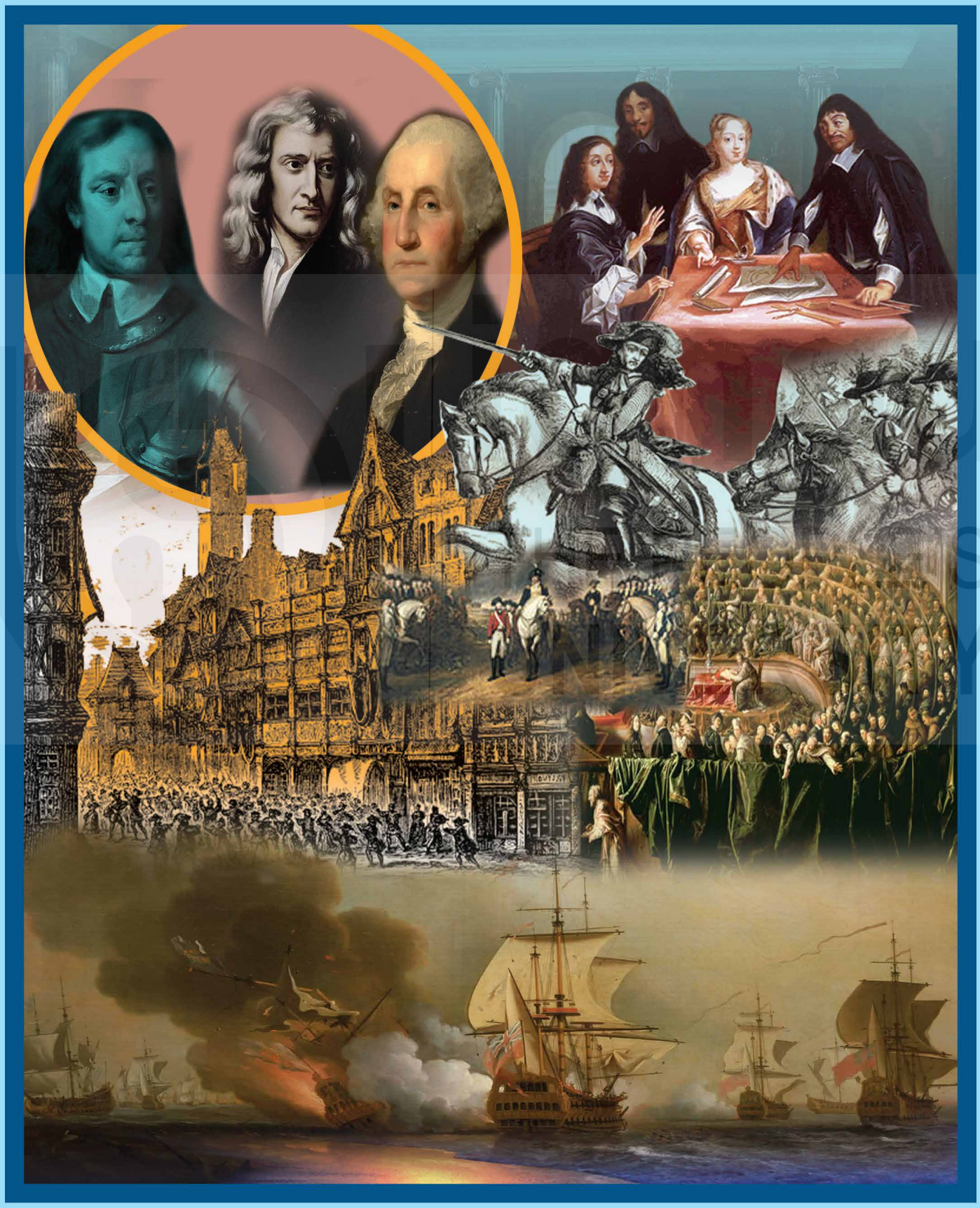
School of Social Sciences

BHIC - 108
RISE OF THE MODERN WEST – II



"शिक्षा मानव को बन्धनों से मुक्त करती है और आज के युग में तो यह लोकतंत्र की भावना का आधार भी है। जन्म तथा अन्य कारणों से उत्पन्न जाति एवं वर्तमान विषमताओं को दूर करते हुए मनुष्य को इन सबसे ऊपर उठाती है।"

— इन्दिरा गांधी

"Education is a liberating force, and in our age it is also a democratising force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances."

– Indira Gandhi

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RISE OF THE MODERN WEST-II

School of Social Sciences
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July, 2021

ISBN: 978-93-91229-93-1

Further information on the Indira Gandhi National Open University courses may be obtained from the University's Office at Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110 068 or visit our website: http://www.ignou.ac.in

Printed and published on behalf of the Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, by Registrar, MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi

Lasertypeset by Nova Publication and Printers Pvt. Ltd., Plot No. 9, Sector 59, Phase-II, Faridabad.

Printed at: Nova Publications and Printers Pvt. Ltd., Plot No. 9, Sector 59, Phase-II, Faridabad.

Contents

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

This course is concerned about the economic and political rise of Europe during the modern period. Although the Renaissance may be termed as the beginning of European modernity at the intellectual level, it was during the seventeenth century that modern Europe was shaped more comprehensively. It is for this reason that scholars have termed the period from the Renaissance up to about the beginning of the seventeenth century as 'early modern', while the period since the seventeenth century has been normally referred to as the 'modern period'. It was during this later period that the ideological, economic, social, and even cultural foundations of modern Europe were laid down. This period witnessed the rise of modern science to the pinnacle of success, the development of new ideologies which sought validation in terms of science, and gradual decline in the hold of religion on social and individual life. In the period covered by this course – from seventeenth to the early eighteenth century – we will find the firm beginning of such trends.

The course begins with the 'seventeenth-century crisis' which has been considered as a general crisis affecting the European economy, polity and society. It quite thoroughly set off the processes which radically altered Europe. In **Unit 1**, we will discuss these issues in detail. In **Unit 2**, we will take up the topic of massive European expansion throughout the globe in search of wealth, for trade, for settlement, and even for knowledge and to satisfy curiosity. The fact that the world-wide European migrations also influenced European economies and ideas at various levels has also been touched upon in this Unit.

The great religious divide between Catholicism and Protestantism, which had originated in the sixteenth century, sharply divided European state and society in this period. The unity of apparently monolithic European religions was shattered giving rise to innumerable sects which experimented with a great variety of ideas in the modern context. This process and some of important religious sects have been discussed in **Unit 3**. Another development was the rise of new philosophies which, in many ways, represented a sharp break from the medieval mentality. Rationalism and empiricism were the two most important philosophies of this period which have been discussed in **Unit 4**. It is to be expected that in such a volatile period witnessing massive changes at economic, ideological, scientific, and social levels, there would be development of new art forms as well as changes in cultural and social norms. **Unit 5** discusses these new developments.

Unit 6 discusses the English Revolution which was a relatively more violent expression of the changes occurring during this period. In England, the new emerging economic and ideological forces clashed sharply with the old forces of tradition and order giving rise to a series of violent events during the 1640s and 1650s which briefly resulted in upturning the established order and led to execution of the reigning king. Although monarchy was restored in 1660, the new forces unleashed by the revolution remained active ultimately leading to a compromise solution known as the 'glorious revolution' in 1688.

One of the greatest developments during the seventeenth century related to the rise of modern science which completely changed the ways of thinking over a period of time. Modern science has been in the centre of European modernity

serving as the justification and validation for all other developments in thought. This has been dealt with in **Unit 7**.

Unit 8 discusses the nature of European politics in the seventeenth century. Here also we see a change in political structure in many European countries. The rise of absolutist monarchs in many European countries such as France, Prussia, and Russia was one important trend. Another trend was the existence of empires such as the Austrian and Ottoman empires. The third trend was that of aristocracies as in Poland. However, Absolutism and Constitutional Monarchy were two most important political forms which were consolidated in this period

Unit 9 deals with Enlightenment – the greatest collective intellectual movement in this period. A range of great intellectuals such as Pierre Bayle, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Kant, Adam Smith, and many others in several European countries clearly attested that European modernity had arrived. Their writings represented a sharp break from the entire medieval intellectual legacy which had continued to linger on until early eighteenth century. These intellectuals revolutionized the modes of thought in the modern period.

One of the most important developments in the eighteenth century was American war of independence which freed one of the most important European colonial possessions. **Unit 10** discusses this phenomenon, also known as 'American Revolution', which inspired a large number of countries in the world with the ideas of constitutionalism and democracy. In **Unit 11**, we will discuss changes in agricultural production and demographic profiles of European countries in this period. In the eighteenth century, a dramatic transformation in agriculture occurred in Britain leading to concentration of landholdings and dispossession of a large number of people. In many other European countries also important agricultural changes were taking place which would ultimately pave the way for industrial transformation. The increase in population in various countries also played a significant role in this process.

Unit 12 further explores this process of preparing the grounds for the industrial transformation in Europe. It discusses the concepts of 'industrious revolution' and 'proto-industrialization' as referring to important changes in manufacturing practices and mentalities which proved crucial for later developments. **Unit 13** is concerned with the processes whereby Britain and other European economies, which had taken some steps towards modern industrialization, sought to reorient the colonial expansion and trade patterns establishing new colonies in the Indian Ocean, the Caribbean and elsewhere. Here, we will also discuss the impact of these processes in creating a divergence in the later developments of Europe and the rest of the world. Taken together, this course aims to provide you a broad picture of various economic, intellectual, religious, and social phenomena in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

UNIT 1 SEVENTEENTH CENTURY 'EUROPEAN CRISIS'*

Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

Seventeenth century marks a watershed in the history of Europe. It led to the end of feudal age in Western Europe while in the Central and Eastern Europe; it resulted in the strengthening of feudalism. It also completed the shift of the commercial and economic activities from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Coast on Western Europe. It meant the decline of the Mediterranean states and the rise of England, Holland and northern France.

- In this Unit, you will study why the Seventeenth century crisis is considered the 'General Crisis' and how it affected the economy, polity, social life and geographical contours of the European map,
- you will get familiar with the debate that has taken place among historians on the nature and dimension of the crisis,
- you will be able to explain the importance of 'The Thirty Years War' and how it contributed to the crisis in central Europe, and
- you will be able to trace the impact of the general crisis on political, economic and social life of Europe.

* Resource Person : Prof. Arvind Sinha

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Medieval Europe experienced alternate phases of growth and contraction and this trend continued till the seventeenth century. There was a long period of steady economic growth, expansion of agriculture and demographic upsurge beginning from the tenth century. Black Deaths in the early fourteenth century reversed the process with heavy population losses that affected agriculture, trade and manufacturing sectors adversely. The revival of the European economy began from the last quarter of the fifteenth century. The sixteenth century is seen as a phase of prosperity, demographic increase, significant expansion of agriculture, introduction of proto-industrialization in some parts of Europe and the formation of new trade organizations. The total volume of trade gained new heights. Social attitudes changed with the spread of Renaissance and Reformation and the emergence of colonial empires across the globe transformed the structure of trade. New business activities and commercial institutions were formed to handle the increasing volume of trade. The colonial empires brought numerous new products to the European markets such as silver, cotton, cochineal, sugar, potatoes, tomatoes, spices, indigo and many other items. It contributed to the rise of monetization of economy in several regions of Europe.

However, this vast expansion of economy came to an end between 1600 and 1620 in many parts of the continent. What led to the decline, what was the nature of the crisis and how it affected Europe have been explained differently by historians and scholars. This has become a prolonged historical debate. In the subsequent sections, we are going to study these aspects in detail.

1.2 HISTORICAL DEBATE ON THE NATURE OF CRISIS

It was Voltaire, the famous French philosopher of Enlightenment, who brought out the concept of general crisis in his *Essai sur les moeurs et l'ésprit des* nations in 1756. An interesting debate began from 1950s among the historians of early modern Europe that lasted for almost two decades. This lively debate was mainly centred on the question whether the experience of each country followed a pattern of change that was a part of the entire European experience of pre-modern period or whether each country followed a separate path of transformation. Many historians developed their own theoretical explanations that resulted in a broad agreement on the idea of 'general crisis of the seventeenth century'. The major works on this theme included the names of Roland Mousnier, Eric Hobsbawm, H.R. Trevor-Roper, Theodore K. Rabb, R.B. Merriman, Niels Steensgaard, J.V. Polisensky, etc.

The intense debate on the subject of general crisis can be seen in the three broad approaches: The first view argues that the crisis was economic in origin. We may divide the economic interpretation into; a) those arguments based on theoretical classical Marxist interpretation, b) arguments based on economic data — issues like money and prices, c) those arguments which focus on demographic factors. The Marxist writings (on the general crises) present this period as a critical phase in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The debate was initiated by Eric Hobsbawm in 1954 and was followed by Boris Porchnev. The crisis was seen as a class conflict that took place at two levels. In the eastern region of Europe, the

struggle was between the peasants and feudal nobility in which the latter won. In the Western Europe, the struggle to control the state was between bourgeoisie and feudal nobility and was decided in favour of the bourgeoisie. Eric Hobsbawm, a leading Marxist historian, considered it as a major crisis of European economy. In his initial essay, Hobsbawm observed that the seventeenth century was not only an era of economic crisis but also a period of social revolt. Later, Hobsawm integrated the seventeenth century crisis as a part of much wider transition from feudalism to capitalism. Ruggiero Romano provided massive data from various sources to pinpoint the precise moment of the crises. According to him, the exact time of the crisis was 1619-1622, when the economic growth of the sixteenth century ended and marked the beginning of stagnation or decline. He also presents it as an economic and political crisis. But his thesis provided factual basis to Hobsbawm's interpretation. Thus, the Marxist writers saw the seventeenth century crisis a crisis of production and the major force behind at least some of the revolutions was the force of the producing bourgeoisie, restricted in their economic activities by the obsolete, restrictive and wasteful productive system of feudal society. The crisis of production was general in Europe, but it was only in England where the feudal monarchical absolutism was overthrown by the rising landed gentry and urban bourgeoisie (1642-1660) paving the way for the triumph of capitalism. The second approach concentrates on political issues, particularly the mid-century revolts and rebellions. H.R. Trevor-Roper was one of the earliest writers to suggest the thesis of 'The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century. He picked up the theme that it was not the crisis of the European economy but a crisis in relations between society and the state, a result of the expansion of Renaissance Monarchies and whose financial burden the society could not bear. He sees the major events of this period as political revolution. R.B. Merriman (in his *Six Contemporaneous Revolutions*) sees them as a social and political manifestation of the crisis that had been affecting the entire Europe. In his work, he compares various mid-century revolts which took place in England, France, Catalonia, Naples and Holland.

The third major interpretation of the crisis takes a sceptical view towards the very concept of general crisis. There are historians who oppose the theory of general crisis of the seventeenth century. J.H. Elliott had doubts whether the instability caused by widespread revolts was in any way exceptional. For him, similar clusters of revolts could be seen between 1560s and 1590s. He tried to draw attention of the historians to a series of tensions within early modern political structures that caused frequent revolts and rebellions. Elliott was rather sceptic of Trevor-Roper's focus and explanation of the mid-seventeenth century revolts. In 1975, Theodore K. Rabb published his famous work on this subject titled *The Struggle for Stability in Early Modern Europe*. It synthesized the discussion on the crisis debate of the last twenty five years and sought to rescue the idea of crisis with a more precise definition of the term. At the same time, he broadened the scope of the European history between 1500 and 1700 piecing together new information from political, economic, social and cultural history into the crisis debate. Rabb made historians to employ the word 'crisis' with greater precision and brought cultural dimension of change into the discussion on general crisis.

In between the above mentioned approaches, we find some other interpretations who try to synthesise various viewpoints. Roland Mousnier in his work, *Les XVIe et XVIIe Siécle* suggested that the period between 1598 and 1715 was one of crisis that could be seen in the fields of demography, economy, administration

but also in intellectual sphere. This crisis marked a decisive shift towards a capitalist order.

The 1960s and 70s witnessed coming together of many historians to support or reject the idea of the 'general crisis'. An interesting explanation was provided by J.V. Polisensky, who tried to establish connection between the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) and the seventeenth century crisis and saw them both as the conflict of opposite political and cultural societies — one Protestant that was liberal, and the other Catholic that was absolutist in character.

Another important contributor to the debate on the seventeenth century crisis came from Niels Steensgaard. He provided an alternative thesis that connected the economic and political by highlighting the impact of increasing taxation and expanding state structure. This impoverished the population and pushed the people to the margins of subsistence. It created an economic crisis that was as much a crisis of production as distribution. He suggested that the period from 1500 to 1700 experienced extended instability beginning with early sixteenth century.

In recent years, the thesis of the seventeenth century crisis is generally accepted by the scholars of early modern Europe but its scope has been broadened.

1.3 ORIGINS OF THE CRISIS

Each historian has different opinion regarding the date and intensity of the crisis as it varied from one region to another. The general view on the subject is that European crisis actually developed during the first half of the seventeenth century. Some contemporary scholars provide long list of revolts and upheavals that caused a crisis of urban economy and trade and led to economic depression, loss of population, social unrest and large-scale wars. The period of the Eighty Years' War [1582 -1662] experienced widespread uprisings throughout the Netherlands against the Spanish rule. It had impact on other parts of Europe. The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) had caused havoc in several states of Central Europe as well as in France and Spain. France also witnessed a series of revolts and uprisings beginning in the Aquitaine province against the rise of *gabelle* (salt) tax. The widespread peasant uprisings between 1590s and 1620s, *Nu Pieds* (1637), and the intermittent *Croquant* peasant revolts throughout the seventeenth century created serious problems for the French rulers. *Nu-pied* revolt was an anti-fiscal rebellion in Normandy and another one in Périgueux where over 30,000 armed peasants revolted not against the ruler of France but mostly against the tax officials. Frondes (1647-1652) was a major socio-political movement that clearly revealed the prevalence of deep social crisis in France. The Fronde rebels were opposed to the growing powers of the absolute rulers of France by strengthening the powers of the *Parléments* and make it a sovereign body. However, the revolt failed and subsequently, the Bourbon dynasty not only recovered their ground but the royal absolutism under Louis XIV was further strengthened. It was around the same time, England was involved in a civil War (1642-49) where the Stuart ruler, Charles I was executed by the supporters of Parliament. The political experiments continued till 1660 but the political issues could not be resolved till the Revolution of 1688-89. Boris Porchnev describes the Fronde revolt of France as a variant of the English bourgeois revolution of 1640s and a prologue of the French Revolution of 1789.

There were more revolts in the Mediterranean region at the same time. These included the revolts of Catalonia, Naples and Portugal which created crisis in the Spanish empire. The peasant revolt in 1640s spread across Barcelona in Spain, driving out the Castilians and killing the Viceroy. The revolt in Naples in Italy (in July, 1647) was the direct outcome of food shortage, heavy taxation and administrative inefficiency. For a brief period, Naples had become a republic under the leadership of Masaniello and enjoying French protection. However, the Spanish ruler re-conquered it. Some other parts of Europe too faced scattered uprisings like Swiss peasant uprising (1653), Ukranian revolts (1648-54), Russian revolts (1672), Kuruez movements in Hungary, Irish Revolts (1641 and 1689) and the Palace revolution in the United Provinces of the Netherlands. A cluster of these revolutionary upheavals, political and social protests make several writers believe that there was some widespread crisis in Europe that had different time of their origins but they also reflect some commonness.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Explain why the crisis of the seventeenth century is called the general crises?

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2) Discuss the origins of the crisis.

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1.4 EXTENT OF THE CRISIS

The crisis had different dimensions, some of which we will discuss in the following sub-sections.

1.4.1 Demographic Crisis

The population of Europe had an impressive growth by the end of the sixteenth century; the growth was checked in many parts. While some regions experienced stagnation, in others places, the growth rate slowed down. It is true, the population figures are not accurate and are impressionistic depending on each historian's calculation, the available data on population indicates a downward trend in many parts of Europe, except for a few regions in northern Europe such as the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. The Thirty Years' War had disastrous impact on the German population, where the losses were as much as 35 to 40 per cent. The densely populated states like Saxony, Brandenburg and Bavaria lost almost

half their population. Poland too, witnessed a similar trend. The Spanish population fell from 70,68,000 to 50,25,000 between 1587 to 1650.

The population of southern Europe declined quite sharply during the seventeenth century. In 1700, it was less than that of 1600. On the other hand, situation was different in some other parts of Europe where the population increased swiftly in northern Europe including the Low Countries and England. Even here, the rate of growth slowed down during the second half of the seventeenth century.

What led to the decline of population in the seventeenth century is explained differently by the historians. Peter Kriedte suggests that the demographic decline was the result of Malthusian and social crisis. Thomas R. Malthus, a British economist of the eighteenth century had explained that in a natural economy (that Europe had in most parts except northern Europe) population grows at geometrical rate while the production of the natural economy increases by arithmetic proportion. This creates periodic crisis which is resolved after the loss of population when production and population ratio is restored.

The demographic crisis had long-term consequences, including on family life, birth patterns, on food habits and on the age of marriage. At the same time, one should remember that since the extent of demographic changes was not uniform, its impact varied according to the rise or decrease of population.

1.4.2 Agrarian Crisis

Agricultural condition depended to a large extent on population and technological factors. European agriculture showed signs of contraction and growth alternatively for the past centuries. It is difficult to present an accurate picture of the European agriculture in i the absence of reliable data. We know more about the French agriculture of the medieval times, thanks to the in-depth studies of the French *Annales* writings of Pierre Goubert, Immanuel le Roy Ladurie, Jaque le Goff, etc. A noteworthy contribution on feudalism came from the pen of Mare Bloch in two volumes on 'Feudalism'. Fernand Braudel's classical work brings out the agrarian weaknesses of the Mediterranean region. Poor land, soil deficiency, and hilly tracts prevented cultivation of food crops. This region produced citrus fruits and encouraged sheep farming. The growing population during the sixteenth century at many places resulted in fragmentation of land holdings. Absence of technological innovation meant increasing food production through land reclamation and deforestation. During the seventeenth century, European agriculture at many place showed signs of exhaustion. In central, eastern and southern Europe feudal system dominated. In the case of France, agrarian decline was not pronounced but there was growing pressure on agriculture imposed by state authorities. To ensure its fiscal interests, the French monarchs protected the small peasants of their tiny landholdings against feudal landlords but this policy resulted in long-term agrarian stagnation. State exploited the peasants by raising taxes like *taille* to meet the vast administrative structure and bear the financial burden of continental wars. The nobility too compelled the peasants to pay heavy taxes that impoverished peasantry and checked agriculture investment or improved technology. France faced a crisis of productivity and consequently, the French agriculture could not transform itself on the capitalist line as had happened in England.

The index of grain prices in France declined from 100 in 1625 -50 to 1681-90 , while in Poland, the grain prices declined from 100 index points in 1580 to about 87 in 1650 [Peter Kriede] . The Swedish- Polish War resulted in further destruction of agriculture. In Germany and Austria, declining trend in agriculture was visible. The declining ground rents brought down the prices of property and there was no incentive to invest in agricultural property. On the other hand, the prices continued to rise from 1601-10 level in England (1147), Belgium (150) and Austria (118) per cent. The cereal price in western and central Europe remained high till the middle of the seventeenth century, but in western and northern parts of Europe, the boom continued but in Germany, agriculture collapsed due to the thirty years' war. In certain areas like Brabant, Flanders, Zealand etc, grain prices fell and grain was replaced by crops like flax, hops and rape seed. The seventeenth century crisis widened the gap between the eastern and western and northern and southern zones of Europe. While eastern and central-eastern Europe witnessed an extension and tightening of serfdom, England and the Netherlands saw the breakdown of capitalism and agriculture began to move in the capitalism direction. Forage crops like cloves and Turnip were popularized. Crop rotation was introduced on a large scale and alternative crops were grown to increase soil fertility. Thus, we find partial dislocation of the old types of communed holdings in the north-western regions of Europe.

1.4.3 Monetary Crisis

Some scholars, less theoretically motivated than the Marxists, concentrate on the data of price trend to explain the seventeenth century crisis. Earl J. Hamilton and Pierre Channu bring out the role of Seville (the famous Spanish port) and the Atlantic trade leading to financial crisis. According to this view, declining supply of money and the failure to finance the Atlantic trade caused the crisis. The frequent debasement of coinage throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries indicate an acute scarcity of currency. It was temporarily solved by the bullion imports from the 'New World'. The economic growth of the sixteenth century began to slow down once the quantity of silver imports to Europe was reduced. Hamilton considers monetary factors related to the bullion imports the main reason for the crisis. He worked out a detailed table of silver imports that reached peak in 1620 and then declined sharply. This caused decline in the money in circulation. Hamilton argues that an upward movement of prices would result in surplus profit and greater investment in business and industry, while the declining circulation of money results in reduced profit margin and dis-investment from manufacturing and commercial fields. Hamilton believes that the latter condition prevailed in the seventeenth century. Ruggiero Romano argues that the first forty years of the century experienced constant and at times sharp contraction in the issue of money. For him, the crucial years were between 1619 and 1622. Romano contends that the minting of coins suffered contraction causing shortage of monetary stock. Despite falling prices, there was considerable expansion in credit. He argues that the prices should not be seen in isolation because money, prices, exchange and banking were essential facts of production and distribution. Prices should not be seen in isolation. They act like thermometer to gauge trends in trade, revenue and production. Prices alone can hardly explain the intricate economic situation because the economic reality was too complicated.

While discussing the nature of the crisis, Jan de Vries does not subscribe to the view that the European economy grew or fell along the flow of precious metals

from the 'New World'. Yet, he concedes that the monetary instability played a definite role in short-term cycles, particularly the one in 1619-22. There are several other writers who reject Hamilton's arguments. They provide counter argument that the American silver did not stay in Europe and was re-exported via Levant to India and China. So the silver import to Europe had virtually no role in the creation of crisis.

1.4.4 Climatic Factors

Annales writers present the seventeenth century crisis in an interesting way. The crisis is seen by them as a 'subsistence' crisis forming a part of c*onjuncture* (a crisis located not in the structure but caused by coming together of many short and long-term factors) broadly forming a part of economic domain. To the *Annales* writers, the crisis of the seventeenth century involved joining together of conjunctural factors like crop failure, grain prices, heavy taxation, epidemics and climatic factors along with population, land tenures, etc. These resulted in widespread peasant uprisings, agrarian crisis, shrinking trade and decline in capital investments. The impact was more devastating since the production was based on limited technology. *Annales* writings highlight the role of climatic factors. Not only historians but even solar physicists, geologists, meteorologists — they all carried out an inter-disciplinary study to understand the nature and extent of the seventeenth century crisis. Geoffrey Parker explains the contribution of astronomical studies in locating the non-human factors in this crisis. Some scientists describe this period as 'the Little Ice Age'. A. E. Douglass, a leading European astronomer, in his diary noted a sharp decline of sun spots between 1645 and 1715 with intermittent spells of normal phases. G. D. Cassini, the Director of Paris Observatory, also observed in 1676 with regard to *aurora borealis* (The Northern Lights caused by particles from the sun entering earth's atmosphere). Similar observations were made by the scientists of Scandinavia and Scotland. Declining solar energy causes an increase of carbon-14 in atmosphere. It is a condition most harmful for living organisms.

A study of dendrochronological evidence (study of tree rings inside the tree trunk) was corroborated with the records of vineyards, particularly in France. It found that the tree lines were deeper and thick during these years- phenomena associated with wet weather conditions in summer an acute winters. Another significant change was about the lowering of snow line that resulted in the decrease of cultivable area. This also had bearing on the decreasing volume of river water and the ripening of food grains. All these factors played a cumulative role in the making of general crisis.

1.4.5 Economic Crisis

Europe had a wide range of economy that was uneven and functioned at different levels during the sixteenth century — a period of growth and expansion in agriculture, manufacturing and trade. On the nature and extent of the crisis, historians have come out with different explanations. Fernand Braudel, J.I. Israel, Domeico Sella, etc. support the view of Hobsbawm who argues that the crisis was basically a complete economic regression but its outcome varied according to regional variations. Like other Marxists writers, he calls it the crisis of production that affected trade, commerce and manufacturing.

There are scholars who suggest that the economic setbacks were not of uniform pattern. During the crisis, a few industrial centres witnessed fundamental transformation. While some centres lost their earlier dominance like Venice, Florence, Antwerp, some others rapidly progressed towards capitalist organization. Most of the regions in Germany, Mediterranean state and southern France experienced sharp decline. Within each region, a few alternative centres of production emerged-decline of Florence in Italy was followed by the rise of textile industry in Prato and Sienna. In the north-western Europe, decline of Antwerp was followed by the rise of Amsterdam. Cloth manufacturing in Europe underwent significant changes, Textile industry functioned within the artisan form of production. Most historians agree that the Italian cloth virtually disappeared from the world of international trade. The Flemish wool industry went into long-term contraction. Many textile centres of France such as Rouen, Amiens also declined or stagnated. However, the textile sector in England and Holland experienced distinct growth in the sixteenth century and continued even in the seventeenth century. Leiden emerged as one of the leading centres of industry where the population grew from about 12,00 in 1582 to almost 70,000 by mid-seventeenth century. The rise of new draperies led to the English domination of the markets of Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean. The other regions could not compete with the English products because of price advantage. The destruction of the traditional textile centres caused socio-economic dislocation and unemployment of artisans. It is estimated that the number of weavers in woolen textiles had come down by 1700 to hardly 10 per cent of what was a century back. The Spanish shipbuilding industry had started declining from the last decade of the sixteenth century. During this period, the Dutch (Holland) shipping industry developed very fast and became the carrier of international cargo. The emergence of the colonial empire encouraged the growth of the commercial fleet, which increased thrice between 1629 and 1686. Holland also became the hub of commercial activities including banking, insurance and stock exchange. Romano points out that the sixteenth century industrial and commercial expansion in Europe was supported by agricultural prosperity. The setback in the seventeenth century was largely linked to the agricultural crisis. Two important trading zones of pre-sixteenth century were the Mediterranean and the Levant. During the seventeenth century, the former no longer supplied bulk manufactured items while the Levant trade suffered with the opening of new routes to Asia.

During the sixteenth century, European economy tried to break the medieval traditional structure to reach the capitalist mode of production. In most parts of Europe, the feudal social framework resisted that change. The seventeenth century crisis is seen by the Marxist historians, including Hobsbawm as the manifestation of the feudal crisis existing in the mode of production spreading across the European economy. The old structure did not allow sustained growth beyond a point. According to Hobsbawm, the crisis demonstrated Europe's failure to overcome the obstacles created by the feudal structure to reach the stage of capitalism. The crisis was resolved in different ways by different societies. The solution to the crisis could be found only in the English bourgeois revolution of 1640s. It was only in England where the forces of capitalism could triumph and the old structure was destroyed and a new economic order was created.

Check Your Progress 2

1) How do the population figures suggest the magnitude of crisis?

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2) What was the significance of agrarian trouble in creating the crisis of the seventeenth century?

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3) What was the extent of economic crisis?

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1.5 THE THIRTY YEARS WAR (1618-1648) AND THE CRISIS

Josej Polisensky suggests that the Thirty Years War was an integral part of the crisis, at least of Central Europe, and showed the culmination of internal contradiction in the structure of the society that violently impacted the economic, social and cultural relations.

Causes: Historians initially viewed it as the last religious war between the Catholics and the Protestants originating in Germany. Now it is accepted that the trouble started in the German Kingdom of Bohemia which was a part of the Holy Roman Empire. It held an important place in the Empire as it contributed heavy material and manpower. It had a large number of textile and glassware industries besides iron, silver and copper mines. Bohemia was one of the centres of Religious conflicts even before Martin Luther. The religious conflict assumed political colour when outside states fought for the cause of the Catholics and the Protestant states supported the Protestants. This turned into a dynastic and religious war led by Spain and France and Netherlands. This shows that it was not a war between the catholics (both Spain and France were Catholic powers fighting against each other) and the Protestants.

An alternative explanation sees the war as a war between the two major empires (Spain and France) to control Europe. Many historians see the war as a struggle between two powerful dynasties of Europe-the Habsburg of spain and the Valois of France for the hegemony of Europe.

A few historians like C.V. Wedgewood provide a German approach. For them, the war was sparked off by a number of revolts against the Habsbueg rule of the Holy Roman Empire in various parts of Europe. Over half a century of religious and constitutional disputes led to the formation of two rival groups in Germany.

J. V. Polisensky focuses on internal forces in an excessively German approach on Bohemia. According to him, the conflict was a political one and emerged from the policies of the old ruling classes in various regions of Europe but the crisis had deep economic roots.

The Thirty Years War ended with the Treaty of Westphalia which formed an extremely important document. It altered the political map of central Europe. This was the most destructive war that shifted its terrain at short intervals. The war marked a new form of territorial wars- a transition from men-based offensive to dependence on firepower including artillery and volley strikes. Thus, the subsequent wars became more offensive in nature.

The war led to a long-term peace between the Catholics and the Protestants. The latter were given back church properties that were seized and the supporters of Calvin were given religious toleration. The Protestant leadership in Germany passed from the hands of Saxony to Prussia-Brandenburg.

The most important result of the war was the disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire. The weakening of the Empire implied the consolidation of the larger German states like Palatine, Bavaria, Saxony and Brandenburg. It led to the rise of northern Germany as a major military power to counter-balance the traditional power of Austria in the southern Germany.

Historians have divided opinion about the socio-economic impact of the war. One set of historians (called the 'Disastrous war school) argue that the war had disastrous consequences and marked the decline of Germany, while the set of writers (called the Revisionist School) suggest that the impact has been highly exaggerated and the decline og Germany was not caused by war alone and had started much earlier.

1.6 MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES AND THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY CRISIS

Spain and Italy, according to Fernand Braudel, constituted a common economic and geographical zone that dominated the European trade till the sixteenth century when most of Europe was still feudal.

1.6.1 Decline of Spain

Spain possessed a vast and most powerful empire in and outside Europe. The extensive colonial possessions across the Atlantic Ocean provided enormous wealth, including silver and gold. The long distance trade across the ocean promoted the Spanish navy and shipping industry. The Spanish possessions under

the Habsburg dynasty in Europe included the Netherlands, Austria and some German and Italian states. Spain appeared to be at the pinnacle of glory during the sixteenth century but in the seventeenth century it had become a second-rate power. The decline of Spain constitutes an interesting debate among the scholars and focused on the internal versus the external factors that were responsible for the decline.

A group of seventeenth century writers in Spain called Arbitristas were the first to present a picture of Spanish decline. They were warning the Spanish rulers of the impeding troubles and suggested a drastic change of state policies. Historians of the twentieth century more or less agree on the Spanish decline during the seventeenth century but there is no unanimity on various questions regarding the actual reasons of decline.

As to the precise period of decline, we find no unanimous answer. Each historian has a different view on it. According to one view, the period of expansion lasted till about 1550s and thereafter the decline set in. It reached culmination point in 1640s. Another view suggests that the decline started in the 1620s but certainly not earlier than 1598.

On the issue of the nature of decline, again there is no unanimity of opinion. According to J. H. Elliott, the Spanish decline should not be seen in isolation. Most of the seventeenth century in Europe experienced a period of commercial contraction and demographic fall or stagnation varying according to regions. For him, certain features of decline were universal and not confined to Spain. He also argues that the decline was not as dramatic as presented by earlier writers because even in the seventeenth century, Spain was still the largest military power. Henry Kamen and Carlo M. Cipolla refute the decline thesis because for them Spain never developed to begin with. Spain's economic development was hindered over centuries by fundamental weaknesses.

Another question that has been raised by scholars is whether the decline was of entire Spain or was it confined to some specific regions like that of Castile. Many historians suggest that the decline was of only a few states of Spain. For J. I. Israel, in the state of Valencia, there were distinct signs of growth and expansion in the sixteenth century followed by stagnation and decline as was the case of Castile, the biggest state of Spain. Henry Kamen points out that Catalonia witnessed distinct developments during the same period. For Kamen, it was the decline of Castile and not of entire Spain.

Reasons for the decline have been explained differently by the historians on the subject. Among the earliest explanations on the Spanish Crisis during the seventeenth century was provided by Earl J. Hamilton. He argued that the major role in the crisis was silver import from the New World. So long as the silver supply to Spain was increasing, the Spanish economy was well-off but from 1620s, the supply witnessed a downward graph and the decline set in. According to Hamilton, huge quantity of gold and silver from Central America created an illusion of prosperity in Spain. It provided fund for waging foreign wars, massive army, lavish spending by the court, elaborate bureaucracy, wasteful expenditure and an attitude of aversion to manual work in the society. All this led to all-pervasive crisis in Spain when the silver supply decreased. Another historian, Dennis O. Flynn argues that mining profits rather than the volume of silver trade financed the Spanish empire. However, the cost of running the mines continued

to increase leading to a recession in mining by 1620s. Over-dependence of the Spanish state and society on influx of American treasure created a crisis situation but the role of silver was only one factor among many.

Some scholars hold the Spanish society responsible for the decline of Spain. It is suggested that the Spanish society lacked a strong middle class despite a vast colonial empire. The huge influx of precious metals could have led to vast economic expansion of Spain but the opportunity was squandered. Neither the bullion was utilised for industrial development nor was there a rise of powerful class of merchants and businessmen. Unlike the English gentry which showed keen interest in higher agrarian productivity and participated in market operations, the Spanish society revealed contempt for trade and industry.

Most historians suggest that the Spanish decline was mainly caused by economic factors and hastened by politico-social factors. The decline becomes apparent in demographic figures. Though this was not confined to Spain alone and can be found in many parts, particularly in southern and east-central parts of the continent. Equally significant contributory factor in the Spanish decline was the state policy towards agriculture. Several scholars have blamed the state policies for the neglect of agriculture. Fernand Braudel and some other historians point out the shortcomings in the Spanish policy towards agriculture. The state policy favoured sheep farmers by giving them subsidies and monopolies instead of promoting land cultivation which created shortage of corn. The Spanish rulers neither pursued consistent policy towards agriculture nor did they offer anything to the rural farmers.

Historians have divergent views on the industrial condition in Spain. Spain often experienced labour shortages but it is not certain whether it caused industrial decline or de-industrialization. The Spanish woollen industry had grown due to the state policy towards sheep farmers. After 1580, the woollen industry showed declining trend at several manufacturing centres like Segovia, Toledo. In Segovia, cloth manufacturing declined from about 13,000 pieces annually during the last quarter of the sixteenth century to about 3,000 pieces by mid-seventeenth century. The Spanish wool was used for the coarser variety but was gradually manufactured by the Dutch and the English. Ship-building industry of Spain at Basque had grown during the sixteenth century mainly due to the Latin American demand but the Spanish ships could not meet the growing American demand. The destruction of the Spanish armada in 1588 caused rapid decline including the one at Basque. Even the iron manufacturing faced stiff challenge from Sweden. However, those industries such as paper, leather ware experienced modest prosperity. The huge volume of bullion from America failed to revive the Spanish industries. The economy fell into debt trap that became worse with unrealistic expansion of the bureaucratic structure and heavy army expenditure.

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and society on influx of American treasure created a crisis situation but the role of silver was only one factor among many.

1.6.2 Decline of Italian States

Italian economy with its woollen and silk textiles, large concentration of population involved in manufacturing, brisk trade and urban centres created contrasts in income distribution. The economic prosperity of this region began to show signs of decline in the sixteenth century itself.

The decline of the Italian region is evident from the demographic trends. The population began to shrink till the late seventeenth century. This trend was not the same in every region but the overall picture was of demographic fall. On the other hand, states like Sardinia and Genoa experienced population growth in the first half of the seventeenth century. Many factors were responsible for the demographic decline such as famines, plague and epidemics and wars across the region. These had disastrous effect on the urban centres. Higher density of population in the urban regions made them susceptible to epidemics. Although these were short-term factors, they affected economic sphere of the Italian states by restricting markets, production and trade and had serious bearing on the neighbouring states. It led to a major crisis of urban economy and pushed Italian states towards feudalism. Merchant bankers started shifting their capital to safer places outside Italy.

The case of Italian decline is more complicated than that of Spain for a number of reasons. Spain was a vast political empire ruled by an Emperor with a distinct boundary but was economically not so strong as Italy despite possessing rich colonies. Italy was not a single state, rather a geographical region with several independent states with their own rulers (like Florence, Venetia, Piedmont, Milan, Naples, Sicily Papal states, etc). Some of the city-states of northern Italy such as Venice and Florence were prosperous economies and had flourishing network of trade, large fleet of ships and shipyards, countless manufacturing units and concentration of population associated with trading and manufacturing activities. Trade and industry was organized on a pre-capitalist structure when most of Europe had sunk into feudal mode. Italian states had reached an advanced level of economic structure and they had been handing exchange and production through commercial instruments – trading companies like *commendas*, *societas,* which were in the nature of partnerships, banks and commercial instruments like promissory notes, bills of exchange and insurance. In the sixteenth century, Italian states constituted an urban region with heavy concentration of population in towns and cities, unlike Spain which had a large rural population with a few scattered towns and cities.

Venice was a major mercantile power for most part of the sixteenth century and controlled the trade of Mediterranean Sea. When the neighbouring states were experiencing industrial decline, the Venetian silk and woollen industries showed expansion. The spread of plague of 1575-77 hit the industries sharply. It is estimated that nearly one-third of the population perished. Milan's population was reduced by almost half due to plague of 1630-31. But it would be wrong to put the entire blame of decline only on natural calamities. The economic decline had set in from the sixteenth century itself when the Italian city-states were losing their control on international markets. Italy lacked rich natural resources and the prosperity of the states was dependent on manufacturing industries and foreign

trade. The recovery after each natural calamity or war could not be complete and the loss of exports affected the Italian fortunes. The Italian textiles were undermined by the English, the Dutch and to a lesser extent, by the French, who offered their textiles at much lower rates. According to Braudel, the most dramatic problem between 1590 and 1630 Italian industry faced was competition from the low-priced industrial goods from the northern countries.

In the absence of political and geographical unity and varied geographical features, it is difficult to present a uniform picture of the Italian agriculture. The urban centres of the north were generally importers of food grains due to limited arable land, low yields in the absence of technology and heavy density of population who were putting heavy pressure on agriculture. The northern were states usually heavy importers of food grain while the southern states produced agrarian products, the surplus of which was exported to the neighbouring states. There were mountainous region too that received scanty rainfall. There was hardly any improvement of technology in such regions. The main centres of intensive agriculture in northern plains included Venetia, Lombardy, Piedmont, etc. during the sixteenth century were known for producing foodstuff, raw silk, dyestuff and fruits. Agriculture in this region prospered on high urban demand. Natural calamities like the spread of plague, famine, wars and population losses affected industries which in turn reduced demand for agrarian products. The southern states experienced a similar trend and the deterioration of agriculture was apparent by the seventeenth century. Thus, Italy was on the path of decline that lasted more than three centuries.

1.7 IMPACT OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY CRISIS

The seventeenth century crisis had far-reaching consequences on Europe, though the impact was far from uniform. On the one side the crisis created conditions for expansion by clearing away tensions within the productive sectors by restoring balance between population and food supplies. On the other side, it re-enforced feudal grip over a large European population.

From the demographic point of view, the crisis resulted in heavy mortality in some parts of the continent. Military conflicts were one of the chief factors in population decline. Constant wars were accompanied by natural disasters like plague, epidemics and famines which disrupted social life in many regions. The most catastrophic demographical reversal could be seen in Central Europe as most of the battles of Thirty Years War were fought there. These losses varied from 25 to 40%. Poland suffered the same fate. Even Denmark lost about 20% of the total population in the Danish-Sweden War (1658-1669). Italian urban population was lost for various reasons. Demographic losses were more in the urban centres and caused widespread dislocation of trade and industry. It took almost half a century to overcome these losses.

An important post-crisis development was the shifting of economically active region from the continental states towards north-west countries along the Atlantic. The gap between the eastern and western regions had already developed during the sixteenth century but it widened further in the seventeenth century. The rich trans-Atlantic trade contributed to the industrial and commercial prosperity of Western Europe. The two countries-the Netherlands and England gained

immensely from the influx of skilled artisans from Flanders. The French Huguenots (Protestants) also contributed to the paper and glass industry of England. The role of merchants expanded enormously and they organized extensive network of production and procurement for distant markets.

The rise of rural cottage industry had already started in England and the Netherlands. This displacement of urban manufacturing, also called proto-industrialization, gained popularity in western and some parts of central Europe. This marked the first phase of industrialization. The merchants and entrepreneurs dealt with the crisis in a variety of ways. The falling prices and the rising labour costs under the guild system in urban manufacturing centres turned them to cheaper rural labour by larger turnovers. This resulted in the manufacturing of inexpensive draperies in place of expensive cloth. Another method of increasing profits by the merchants and entrepreneurs was to increase the volume of trade with the newly created colonies through the chartered companies to compensate for the reducing colonial demand. By the end of the seventeenth century, woollen, linen, cotton and blended cloth was being produced in the rural regions of England, Low Countries, France, and Switzerland and even in Germany. As a result, the urban manufacturing units and guilds were losing out to rural cottage industry.

The crisis of the seventeenth century led to the strengthening of serfdom as it could not break the feudal structure. The weak bourgeoisie could not challenge the feudal nobility and replace it. The political disunity and breakdown of political states strengthened the powers of rural nobility. The feudal lords were able to enserf the peasants and also controlled the trade of their respective regions. It was from them that Junker class of the nineteenth century was formed. As T. K. Rabb says, the period from about 1660s to 1789 was the age of aristocracy. They became the landowners and courtiers and enjoyed powers and privileges.

From political perspective, economic disruptions, military operations and population losses caused severe strain on the governmental resources. Common people were put under heavy burden of taxation. The French crown became very strong with additional financial resources by way of fresh taxation. During the Thirty years War, the *taille* (tax on peasants' produce) increased six times. The failure of the Fronde revolt strengthened royal powers at the cost of nobility. In England, the overthrow of the feudal monarchy by the rising bourgeoisie and the new landed gentry paved the way for the establishment of constitutional monarchy and representative parliament. It facilitated the route to capitalism in England along with the Dutch republic.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Discuss the decline of Spain in this period.

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2) What was the overall impact of this crisis on Europe?

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1.8 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have taken a comparative view of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries to understand how and why the seventeenth century took a different turn to move away from the period of overall growth and prosperity to economic contraction, political and social dislocation and demographic decline in many parts of Europe. We have tried to analyse why the seventeenth century is termed as the period of 'general crisis'. An interesting debate has taken place since 1950s among the historians in support or against the use of this term. This is considered one of the most debated subjects of the European history. We have explored the theme whether the experience of each country followed a separate and distinct pattern of change or was it a part of general experience of Europe. We have also looked into whether it was a political or an economic crisis.

While studying the origins of the crisis, we have noticed that during the same chronological time span, widespread conflicts, political revolts, demographic catastrophe, economic and monetary difficulties were felt to make this century a period a general crisis.

The extent of the crisis provide a wide range of fields like demography, monetary, agrarian, economic and climatic factors which shaped the historical passage of Europe in opposite directions. We have also tried to show how the Thirty Years' War contributed to the crisis situation, though its geographical terrain was confined to central and Eastern Europe. The progress and historical progress of the Mediterranean zone had received a jolt. The crisis ended the commercial and mercantile domination of Spain and Italy. This trend already prevailed in the sixteenth century but by the seventeenth century, the Atlantic countries like Holland and England and western coast of France became the core commercial zone.

The last segment of the Unit brings out the impact of the crisis. The same crisis resulted in the triumph of capitalism in north-western region but in Eastern Europe the feudal structure defeated the capitalist forces. It led to re-feudalization of the social relations of production in central and Eastern Europe. The crisis widened the economic contrast between the western and eastern as well as north and south Europe.

1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) See Section 1.2
2) See Section 1.3

Check Your Progress 2

1) See Sub-section 1.4.1
2) See Sub-section 1.4.2
3) See Sub-section 1.4.5

Check Your Progress 3

1) See Sub-section 1.6.1
2) See Section 1.7

UNIT 2 EUROPEAN COLONIAL EXPANSION AND MERCANTILISM*

Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- understand the concept of mercantilism, as policy and as stage in the development of capitalism,
- identify the main features of mercantilist policies followed by the different states of Europe and the distinctions between the different states as regards policy and areas of implementation,
- see the linkages between the national monarchies of the 17th and first half of the 18th century and the internal social and political dynamics within their kingdoms,
- realize that these mercantilist policies had some consequences for the non-European world and for the colonies, and how these were distinct from the 16th century; and
- identify the new social classes that mercantile policies brought to the fore, the role of what has often been characterized as merchant capital or merchant capitalism, and the nature of expansion of commercial capital.

* Resource Person : Dr. Nalini Taneja

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In your earlier course you have read about the explorations of the sixteenth century and the discovery by Europeans of many parts of the world they did not earlier know about. You would have understood that while this was called the age of exploration and discovery, it involved much more: it also meant an increase in international trade and commerce and the subjugation of peoples of the continents of America, both north and south, and beginnings of change in the dynamics of relationships with Asia. By the end of the sixteenth century, the expansion of Europe had already resulted in established Spanish and Portuguese empires in South America, the beginnings of slavery in production, a flourishing slave trade, and a system of unequal 'exchange' in which the Europeans benefited.

History of modern Europe cannot be understood without these associated and interconnected developments. The 16th and 17th centuries involved the conquest of new territories for settlement, mostly in the Americas, Siberia, Africa, and Australasia. There was also the aggressive extermination of the populations of the Americas and Siberia, the forced transportation as slaves of 12 million Africans to the Americas and later to the plantations of the Caribbean (between 1500 and 1860) and the consequent domination of the world by the various European powers. It must be noted that the expansion was accompanied by increasing inequalities across the world, between Europe and the rest of the world. Colonialism became a political reality.

The seventeenth century marked the acceleration of the pace of these changes that characterized the sixteenth century and also introduced new elements, both in Europe that is said to have expanded and in the areas where these European powers saw expansion. The expansion of Europe was, thus, an expansion of a world system of economy as well as changes in the nature of the economies the world over. Much of these developments were visible in changes in the nature of trade and commerce and associated production spheres. They also involved encounters between the Europeans and the rest of the world, which had long-term consequences for the history of humanity.

The features that were pervasive during this period have been characterized as mercantilism or merchant capitalism by various historians. There is a debate on whether mercantilism was the precursor, and a stage before capitalism, or whether it was the initial stage of capitalism. The term itself denotes the predominance of trade and commerce in the sphere of economy and the growing significance of the merchants in the social and political life of the different European nations, though not to an equal degree. It also refers to a certain set of policies followed by the different nation states of Europe. It led, from the mid 18th century onwards, to the development of industrial capitalism in Europe and later in North America, and to a well developed system of colonialism in the rest of the world.

2.2 MERCANTILISM: DEFINITION AND FEATURES

There was a link between expansion of Europe and mercantilism. If one looks at the history of economic thought it is possible to trace the parallels between economic ideas of the time and the policies. Just as there were some distinctions

between policies in the different States but also certain commonalities that allow us to characterize those policies as mercantilist and to link them with a certain body of thought, so also despite differences in emphasis and advocacy of policies there are certain commonalities in the economic thought of the period under study that allow us to characterise these ideas as mercantilist. The criticism and theoretical critique of these ideas and polices emerged towards the middle of the eighteenth century and came to be known as *laissez faire* thought and policies. The contrast in policies between the two can be broadly characterized as that between monopoly and control of trade and free trade. Both are reflections of different phases of the merging and grown capitalism, from distinct perspectives within the broad interests of capital accumulation.

Capitalism required that what is produced should be transformed into commodities: that is, products that can be sold in the market and even labour itself, so that product can be sold at a price higher than it cost to produce it. This required a change in the system of production and organisation of the production process. This did not happen all of a sudden, it was a gradual historical process, as we can now see, although the pace of change at that time in history was faster than it had ever been before.

Not all of the changes involved in the process could emerge from within the existing stage of economy, although a large number of them did. But the more enormous impact at that stage was that which came from the external stimuli, i. e., from trade and commerce, which then became part of the production process. It is this stage that we are focussing on in this Unit, which can be called mercantilism.

2.2.1 Mercantilist Ideas

Because the large influx of gold and silver from the "New World" (South America) and the trade in luxury goods from the East (that incrementally became "unequal exchange" began to change the fortunes of the European Nation States, and to some extent their populations (for better, worse or just different), this became a noticed phenomenon. The thinkers and commentators of the time attributed this, correctly, to the increasing and widespread operation of the merchants and the manufacturers. The merchants were also now investing in the production process as well. These economic thinkers then began to advise the existing kings and governments and to influence legislative actions that might promote the interests of their nation, as they saw it. They were, of course, more concerned with the growth of economies and government's revenues rather than the economic health and the prosperity of the population, arguing that general wealth in the region will percolate and contribute to the prosperity of all.

Their basic assumption, therefore, was to identify economic health of their nation with wealth, and to identify wealth with money or circulating capital that can be used to further increase wealth. They also, in general, believed that this can be brought about only by the might of the State, that is the king acting in favor of regulating the economy with this aim as purpose. Hence, their almost universal reliance on state legislation and creation of the enabling laws. The motivating idea, then, was that more wealth should flow into the country than out of it. Exports must exceed imports and colonial conquests must be made to serve these interests. The balance of trade must ensure this, and the politics or government policy must be directed towards this end.

What did the governments need to do? According to these thinkers, they needed to protect the economy, stimulate demand and supervise production. They also needed to regulate commerce, devise and implement taxation policies and other regulations on a scale throughout the State. They needed to protect the interests of merchants and manufacturers against competition from other countries.

While these were the basic ideas, there were distinctions among writers, and in the differing emphases within different countries. There were also distinctions between early mercantilist ideas that influenced policies in fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the seventeenth century mercantilism, leading to more sophisticated ideas in early 18th century when these ideas began to be questioned and critiqued in favor of advocacy of free trade and different indices of measuring wealth.

2.2.2 Mercantilist Policies and Changes in the Nature and Organization of Trade

During the years from late sixteenth century to the first half of the eighteenth century, most of the European monarchs were successful in abolishing the local tolls and taxes of the town or village level, to replace them with a taxation policy that brought revenues to the kings. They also created custom barriers for goods to be brought into their kingdoms by foreign merchants or those manufactured outside their kingdoms. The taxes to be paid in these cases not only increased the taxation base of the monarchs and the central administration, but also enabled the products of one's own country to compete on more favorable terms than those from other countries. Ships, ports, roads and bridges were built across the length and breadth of these kingdoms with the main purpose of encouraging trade.

There were changes in the organization of trade. Long distance trade meant greater risks and investments, which were met by the formation of trading companies, investments in them by merchants and encouragement and protection by the states. Separate trading companies were formed by nations and granted monopoly of trade over areas of political control, thus creating the basic organizational structures for establishing direct linkages between politics, colonization and trade expansion. These companies were to take on important administrative functions as the eighteenth century dawned, and played a transitional role in the eventual direct rule over other continents by the European powers.

This resulted in a shift in the balance towards international trade which increased in volume from the first decade of the eighteenth century, although in the seventeenth century it was still the local and regional trade within European continent that was the most important. But as Koenigsberger has pointed out, this refers to the *volume* of the trade: in terms of *value*, it was the transoceanic trade that brought more revenues or involved larger investments. Spectacular fortunes were made on the basis of a trade 'dependent on a huge and growing European demand for tropical and sub tropical goods' (*Koenigsberger, p.* 174), as well as through the luxury items and fine cloth and artifacts of the Eastern world.

The items for trade consequently expanded in the seventeenth century, being taken over by these companies. From the fabled spice trade the products now included coffee, tea, potatoes, maize, tomatoes, tobacco, and then sugar. Slaves became an important commodity in the 17th century. Coffee and tea houses began

to be part of the urban scene in Europe. Tea was imported directly from China. Sugar was now used by others not just the elite. In fact these commodities, including slaves, became linked with plantation economies in different parts of the world, managed and profited from by the colonial western powers, and brought about significant changes in the production system, making merchant capital integral to capitalist production (quite distinct from the slave economies of the ancient world). Cotton cloth from the Indian subcontinent was already significant item of trade. It was only the mill-made cloth after mid-18th century that was to reverse the trade in this item.

Also, already through the 17th century, the Europeans in the East began to take over a significant volume of the local trade through the Indian Ocean and China Sea, and "with profits made in this trade they paid for the exports of the of Asian goods to Europe." Later, from mid-18th century, they were, through the companies, able to derive the right of revenues, and buy the goods from this for export and profit. The systematic 'drain of wealth' from other continents to Europe and for the benefit of the European states and of the emerging bourgeoisies in these states was pervasive in the seventeenth century and integral to the mercantilist policies. Some state-owned manufactures were also set up in these countries, and ship-building grew in this period. Monopolies were granted in several states even in the sphere of mining and manufacture.

2.3 MERCANTILISM IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The seventeenth century was mainly the era of The Dutch Republic, England and France. Amsterdam was the nerve centre of the now well established world economy. In this section we will discuss the development of mercantilism in some important European countries of this period.

2.3.1 The Dutch Republic

The seventeenth century was the golden age for the Dutch economy, based primarily on its preeminence in trade, with Amsterdam as the major port in Europe. Its merchant fleet tripled during the seventeenth century, accounting for about half of Europe's shipping. Grain and fish from Amsterdam, rye and wheat from Poland and East Prussia, iron produced in Sweden, salt, wine and other commodities, the Dutch brought into their ambit a range of commodities and nations, including the West indies, brazil, Japan, South-East Asia and West European coast, apart from France, Spain and the mediterranean. They also established the trading company settlements in India, Ceylon and Indonesia. Amsterdam also became home to well-established bills of exchange, banking and credit system, and a canal system that allowed boats to reach almost the warehouses of merchants.

As compared with France, there was no obsession with bullion or increasing the quantity of gold and silver gain through trade. Wealth was measured in terms of the quantum of actual goods traded, in advances in ship building and evolving financial institutions required for the increased commercial activity of the 17th century. Commercial revolution, i.e., gain through buying and selling was more significant than regulating industry, although the Netherlands region was among the first to build industry after the Italian states in the sixteenth century. Despite less emphasis on protectionism, however, in the colonies the Dutch did institute

monopolies. The Interests of Holland, a treatise penned by John de Witt in 1662 reflected their mercantilist stance. Because of the greater dependence on international trade, regulation of industry was considered a hindrance by them. Since the Dutch followed and were the first to ride over Spanish and Portuguese monopolies in trade, they preferred freedom for a time until the end of the 17th century when England and France posed serious challenge. Their preeminence remained until subjugated by naval warfare by France and England.

2.3.2 England

In England the conflict between King and Parliament also involved control over resources, but did not have a detrimental impact on economy. In fact England forged ahead of other nations towards the second half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century. She was among the first nations to enact mercantilist legislation. The forms differed over this period, from regulation of domestic industries and manufacturing activities and a concern with balance of trade and commerce till the first half of the 17th century to navigation laws and colonial regulation in the second half.

There was a consistent policy of reducing imports and increasing exports. In 1581 itself the Parliament forbade the export of bullion, and the Tudor laws made it mandatory for English goods to be shipped in English vessels, while those brought by foreign ships had to pay higher duties. Through such laws trade was made more favorable for England within English territory and in the goods that England traded. In 1600 Queen Elizabeth issued a charter creating the East India Company, leading to subsequent acquisition of trading posts in India, in the Indian Ocean in general and in Persia. Thomas Mun wrote several treatises arguing in favor of mercantilist policies, and the significance of a favorable foreign trade for the general wellbeing of the nation. These were titled *Discourse on English Trade with the East Indies and England's Treasure by Foreign Trade*.

The first of several Navigation Acts was passed in 1651 that enabled England to dominate trade in the neighboring regions and soon this became a standard mercantilist practice by all European nations in and around areas of their control. This was accompanied by imposition of tariffs on imports which also became a standard practice, leading to numerous what came to be known as tariff wars through centuries. And as the 18th century advanced there were increasing regulations in the colonies too, which led to wars among the European powers in the colonies as well, for example in India, and expansion of navies and building of naval ships for warfare.

2.3.3 France

It is widely acknowledged that 'mercantilism provided the financial basis for absolutist France.' (*Merriman,* p.275) The chief Minister of Louis XIII, Richelieu, inaugurated mercantilist policies in a systematic manner in France, preferring to stimulate economic growth through royal edicts. He emphasized commerce in comparison with agriculture and stressed the importance of naval power. The main architect of the French mercantilist policies was, however, Jean Baptiste Colbert, the Minister for Finance and Economic matters under King Louis XIV. He persuaded the King that the main contenders for the markets of the world, that comprised of trade in about 20,000 ships owned mainly by the Dutch, were obviously the Dutch, but also the English and the French. A Code for Commerce

was drawn up, he was determined that France should outgain Spain as the gainer of gold and silver, considered the main index of wealth by mercantilists, and insisted on protectionist measures for French industry. As compared to England, regulation of industry was much greater in France, encompassing a whole range of commercial items and manufacture. For the French to emerge as the strongest, it was necessary to take some significant steps, among which the most important was national tariffs. These tariffs were implemented by Colbert in 1664 and 1667, the first set directed mainly against the Dutch and the second against the English trade. It also led to wars against these countries, in Europe and subsequently other areas of the world.

This was accompanied by the formation of French trading companies for the countries of Europe, and in the Baltic and the Levant regions, but the earliest and the most significant were the East India and West India companies established in 1664, and for Africa and parts of North America. These were granted monopolies for colonial trade in the respective areas that that they operated in.

Tolls were abolished within France and collections by the Centre thereby increased. It is estimated that as compared to the one fourth earlier, four fifths of the collections came into the royal treasury, which, apart from other things, enabled the state to pursue an active economic and colonial interests. Some state-owned manufactures were also established.

In this period initiative was also taken to build four new naval ports and a waterway between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

2.3.4 Other Countries

Spain and Portugal that had been the first to initiate control over commerce and silver and gold and the first also to take over land in South America, continued with these policies through the 17th century, although they were left behind in competition with other European powers, in terms of volume, scale and value as the seventeenth century advanced.

Since there was an intrinsic link between mercantilism and absolutism, Prussia, Austria and Russia had evolved policies that ensured control over economy. In Prussia, it was necessitated by the devastation of the Thirty Years War (1618-48), after which the State had to play a major role in economic development. In both Prussia and within the Austrian region that comprised the German states, it was the state that conducted the mercantilist policies, although given their lack of access to the sea and general late decline of feudalism, there was a chronological time lag between western and eastern Europe, and the institution of serfdom continued to hamper growth of a bourgeois society and merchant capital in the 17th and early 18th centuries. In Russia, it was under Peter that the State, in a policy of westernization, took over promotion and organization of manufacture, including ship building. But here what were similar to mercantilist policies were based on the institution of serfdom and a firm alliance with the landed aristocracy. Merchant capital and the bourgeoisie remained weaker than in Western Europe. Although Russia became a powerful absolutist State, it remained an Autocracy in an age when new social forces were gaining in strength in Western Europe and the role of merchant capital had brought sweeping changes in economy. Sweden also attempted mercantilist policies during this era.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Give a definition of mercantilism. Write a brief note on the development of mercantilist ideas.

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2) Give an account of the development of mercantilism in the Dutch Republic and France.

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2.4 THE NATURE OF EUROPEAN EXPANSION

The nature of what has been termed as 'European expansion' was deeply influenced by the interests of the monarchical states and their economic policies. Mercantilism, because it entailed protection of economic interests, brought the European powers not only in conflict and competition with each other, but also necessitated control and hegemony over areas that were being traded with and the resources that promoted and created profit for the states or for the merchant companies which ultimately contributed to the benefit of state revenues.

European expansion was, first and foremost, an expansion in the areas and items of trade, as mentioned above. It is not that the 16th century explorations had not brought new areas within the fold of European trade. In the 17th century, new European national states challenged the supremacy of the older empires of Portugal and Spain, new areas were opened up for trade and exploitation of their resources, and transoceanic trade assumed a transformation, whereby goods could be bought and sold in a second country from where new items could be bought and sold in a third country. Thus, we see beginnings of circular trade patterns involving the areas that ultimately became colonies in later times. To give an example of India, monopoly of trade enabled the East India Company to buy cheap in India, while competitors were kept out, and conquests prevented Indian traders from participating in the same trade as well. Opium from India was taken to be pushed on the Chinese, and tea taken from China to be promoted and sold in India, in Europe and in North America, also a colony. Ultimately, the pattern of agriculture itself was made to change, forcing people in the controlled areas in the non European world to produce items that were lucrative to trade and benefited the western power that controlled the trade in a particular area. By the latter half of the 18th century even revenue rights were snatched and the goods to be traded were brought not from their own resources but from the economies that were becoming colonized.

In the 17th century, more so than in the 16th, trade became synonymous with plunder. Vast areas were destroyed across the world for profits of the powerful European nations and the merchants and the nascent bourgeoisie involved in manufacture. West Indies, East Indies, the continents of Africa, South America, North America, and Asia were subjugated to this plunder that took shape under mercantilism. Huge extraction of surplus and drain of wealth were systematized during what has been euphemistically called the 'commercial revolution'.

Colonies and the flow of wealth from colonies to the European country concerned held a foundational place within mercantilist thought. The 17th century is significant for the creation of legislation that transformed newly acquired conquests into colonies. They were sources of raw materials that could be traded and in the later century used for their own manufactures, colonies were also markets for goods, not necessarily from their own country, but could be from another territory under their control, these territories were also important transit points.

2.5 MIGRATIONS, SETTLEMENTS, AND MERCANTILISM

Within this one-sided relationship between the European powers and the non-European world there was considerable diversity in the way Europe interacted with this world. This is apparent most visibly in the patterns of migrations and settlements that took place during this period.

There was more wealth in the tropical regions, which were also more densely populated and capable of resistance. In the more temperate regions the population was sparse and riches more in the form of raw resources and land than production.

The expansion of Europe manifested itself differently in these two kinds of regions. The nature of colonization of these areas was distinct, although exploitation was equally intense. For example, Europeans, particular the English went as opportunity seekers for gold, land and new occupations to North America, in the process decimating and subjugating the original inhabitants. Similar was the case in Australia and parts of South America. These became controlled by the new migrants and settlers, their settlements becoming the focus of development and economic initiatives. There was a steady change in demography. In these areas the European emigrants far out numbered those in Asia and Africa, for example, while the native populations in these areas declined or was decimated. Moreover, from 17th century onwards, most expansion of European population was within their own imperial systems, i.e., English and the French in their respective areas of control in North America, the Portuguese in Brazil, and so on.

In Asia and Africa, emphasis was on obtaining trading outposts, control of local trade, rights of revenue, financing and taking control of production, and creating local allies. In China, a number of powers ventured and wrested specific areas of control. In India, the Dutch, Portuguese, the French and the English established their bases, and eventually the British succeeded in gaining control. Direct rule, however, came much later. African continent was a similar case of competition and control by the various European powers, the English, the Dutch, and the French. The Russians found their way to the Pacific and across Central Asia.

In the Americas, apart from the white settlers in all these lands, a very huge chunk of emigrants consisted of Africans, transported as slaves, changing the demography of many of these regions through the 18th century and later.

2.6 PLANTATION ECONOMIES

Cutting across these regions was the problem of labour where the new settlers in the Americas or the agents of the companies or the traders in other parts of the world invested in direct production. Plantations were formed, directly owned and supervised by them, generally for the production of one crop, which was a commercial item for sale. It developed first in the Southern states of North America, the settlements in what came to be known as colonies where the shortage of labour was met by utilizing slave labour. These plantations were the foundation of the economies of these colonies.

By the late 16th and 17th centuries, they were already visible in Brazil, the Caribbean region, North and South America, and towards the beginning of the 18th century in other parts of the world, including India (tea, for example), although they became a major feature only since the 18th century, apart from North America where tobacco, cotton and other such items were already grown. This gives an idea of the tremendous growth of such ventures. Plantations were started also in Ireland, after the Irish rebellions of the 16th and 17th centuries.

These plantations were run either through indentured labour or slave labour, usually slave labour where indentured labour was costlier to procure. In North America and the western hemisphere slave labour was introduced quite early in the history of plantations. Indentured labour continued to be profitable in many colonies of the eastern hemisphere.

2.7 SLAVERY AND SLAVE ECONOMIES

Slavery and slave labour were integral to the expansion of Europe and the growth of a world economy. Both European and African traders participated in an enterprise that made humans into slaves and into commodities, i.e., items for sale. Slaves contributed to this expanding commercialization of economy by both being commodities and creators of surplus through expropriation of their labour, in the plantations, as domestic labour and in many other ways. Their conditions of work were inhuman, a fact that is well known, but the immense scale of the profits earned through them has been investigated and assessed only by the research of the last few decades.

From the 16th century itself the Spaniards had begun to import African slaves to substitute for the American Indians, the slave trade increasing by bounds after sugar, tobacco, and later cotton assuming importance as items of trade. And most European powers, traders and ports were involved in this: Spaniards, Portuguese, Danes, the Dutch, and the English. The earliest slaves were also convicts transported for labour to far off lands.

The first shipment of slaves from Africa was as early as 1503 to the West Indies sugar plantations. Both England and France competed here and West Indies was significant for the trade of both these countries. Total import of slaves into all British colonies between 1680 and 1786 is estimated to be over 2 million.

2.8 BANKING AND FINANCE

Although the practice of credit was prevalent in international trade from the late medieval period and deposit banks were also prevalent in the 16th century, it was in the 17th century that banking and finance became a well developed business. Netherlands led the way. The Exchange Bank of Amsterdam was founded in 1609 and 'became the centre of a vast network of credit transactions by merchants trading in the Baltic, the Mediterranean, or the Indian Ocean and the China Sea.' Other cities and countries also set up banks, including England. The Bank of England founded in 1694 was able to rival the Bank of Amsterdam during the 18th century. These were the most important government-backed banks, although a number of commercial private banks were also established. (See *Koenigsberger*, p.179-180). The joint-stock company became the most acceptable form of company organization. Speculation and buying of company shares began. Thus, the 17th century was crucial in developing the structural instruments that were to become the hallmark of capital management.

2.9 MERCHANT CAPITALISM

While most historians are agreed on the general impact of the era of mercantilism and its policies in accelerating the end of feudalism, there are disagreements on the extent and ways in which merchants and transoceanic trade might have constituted the transition to industrial capitalism. The major debates are between those who emphasize the role of markets and others who argue that the crucial factor in the transition was the transformation of economic and social relations within the economies of the European powers.

In general, this period contributed to the creation of accumulation of capital in the hands of the merchants and revenues in the state exchequers. A major portion of this accumulated capital was reinvested in further increasing profits from trade and commerce. In other words, it remained circulating capital and still outside the realm of the manufacturing economy.

But there is a distinction between the beginning and the end of this span poised for the first industrial revolution. We have already spoken of investments in plantations that changed the structure of the economies and mode of producing the crops for market. Quite a substantial part of the drain of wealth from the colonized economies went into changing the face of economies in Europe. This was a form of primary accumulation that injected huge investments in the growing manufactures in Europe, or in mining or even in transforming the small putting-out system where the intervention by merchants in the form of providing raw material or taking over the finished products changed the equations of this small economy with the larger national or international economy. In some European countries there was a wider gap in terms of time between what can be termed merchant capitalism and industrial capitalism. In other countries the gap was much shorter, and in all these countries there were other avenues from within the manufacturing process that surplus for further investment came. In all cases the problem of markets, of labour and dispossession of the small producers had to take place before full-fledged capitalist system could emerge. Mercantilism or merchant capitalism was one significant factor, particularly in the centrality of the emphasis on favorable balance of trade and colonization of non European

economies. The super profits make that obvious. This is irrespective of whether it is given the independent status of merchant capitalism or a transitional period that eventually needed to be dismantled in favour of policies that did away with monopolies that became a hindrance to free trade and more super profits and a new stage in world economy and its structures within nations.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Discuss the nature of European expansion in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

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2) Write a note on the varying pattern of migration and settlement from Europe to other parts of the world.

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2.10 LET US SUM UP

In economy, as in polity, the 17th and first half of the 18th century, constitutes a distinct period. It was a period when trade helped restructure the European economy. The fast development of the world economy was as much based on the unity of its parts as competition, a hallmark of developing capitalism. This period saw the dismantling of the tolls and local taxes that characterized the late medieval economies and survived through the 16th century, to be replaced with systems that ensured unification within nations through systems that ensured revenues for the Kings. It was characterized by monopolies and competition, with state regulation and freedom to pillage. It saw the birth of the modern colonialism and its instruments. It paved the way for industrial capitalism and changed the balance between the European and the non European world.

2.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Base Your Answer on Section 2.2 and Sub-section 2.2.1

2) See Sub-sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.3

Check Your Progress 2

1) See Section 2.4

2) See Section 2.5

UNIT 3 RELIGION, DIVERSITY AND DISSENT*

Structure

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to learn about :

- the religious situation in Europe in the wake of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century,
- the proliferation of numerous religious sects which gave rise to new meanings about religion, society, and politics; and
- the contribution of these sects towards development of some modern ideas about religion and its role in society.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

From the early-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century, Europe was engulfed in a series of religious strife with both Protestants and Catholics of various kinds trying to prove their religious legitimacy, culminating in the long-drawn and devastating Thirty-year War (1618-48) involving most of European countries on either side of religious divide. However, this period was also innovative in religious sense. A large number of religious sects emerged throughout Europe putting forward ideas which could not be accommodated within established religions. This amazing religious fermentation has been termed as 'radical Reformation' as most of these sects derived their initial inspiration from the Protestant Reformation. It is about these ideas and movements that we are going to deliberate in this Unit.

3.2 REFORMATION AND COUNTER-REFORMATION

The evolutionary graph of religion in Europe was rudely disrupted in the sixteenth century owing to the Protestant revolt against the established orthodoxy of Roman Catholic Church. Both at the levels of doctrines and daily rituals, the Protestant

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Reformation sought to make radical changes. On its part, Catholicism responded by initiating a reform process which was internal and relatively controlled. The content and sources of Catholic teaching were sought to be purified on the initiative of Catholic religious leaders themselves.

3.2.1 Protestant Reformation

The greatest religious dissent in early modern Europe was initiated by Martin Luther on 31 October 1517 when he questioned the Catholic Church on the issue of the ecclesiastical sale of indulgences by pasting his 'Ninety-five Theses or Disputations on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences' on the wall of the church in Wittenberg in Germany. He refused to recant his ideas and stood up to the Pope in Rome. In 1520, Luther published three treatises putting forward even more radical ideas about reform. In opposition to the Catholic Church, he asserted that the faith was the most important, if not the only, thing which could save the soul. Out of the seven sacraments recommended by the Roman Catholic Church, Luther retained only two – baptism and Holy communion. He rejected penance, monastic life, celibacy, poverty, and obedience as preached by Rome for attainment of salvation. Instead, he focused solely on faith which he believed was sufficient to save a sinner. This new reform movement permitted even the clergy to marry and lead a family life besides attending to priestly duties. By this move the distinction between the priest and the common people was eliminated paving the way for the 'priesthood of all believers'. The challenge to the papal authority, rejection of priestly mediation, and handing over of interpretive authority to the common believers were the forms of radical dissent which the Reformation initiated.

Luther appealed to the German princes and the people to support him in his quest for freedom from the Papal control from Rome and exhorted them to reform the churches in their territories. He found many adherents for his ideas among the clergy, common people, and princes in Central Europe. Protestant Reformation now began spreading to many non-German areas threatening the religious and political establishments. A significant number of people in many regions of Europe began adopting these ideas and some princes also were converted to Protestantism. In 1524, the first Protestant leagues were formed between some states. The governments in these states moved against Catholicism, abolished convents and monasteries, and turned them into schools and hospitals.

In Switzerland, Protestantism was preached initially by Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531) who, in line with Luther, preached salvation through faith alone. He also emphasized that only the scriptures should form the basis of religious activities. In some respects, Zwingli went beyond Luther by his aggressive iconoclasm and in his belief that the poor were the real image of God, as well as in his views on Holy communion. This was the second most important trend within Protestantism.

The third most important stream of thought within Protestant Reformation was Calvinism which emerged in the 1540s. Jean Calvin (1509-1564) became active in France as the leader of Reformation. He later moved to Geneva to avoid persecution at home. Calvin, like Luther, severely criticised the sacrament of penance, but, unlike Luther, he did not emphasize on faith but rather on obedience to God's will as a way to salvation. In his treatise, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin put forward his famous doctrine of predestination. According to him, some persons were chosen by God for salvation, while the majority were

damned. Calvin also rejected many of the deeply-held Christian beliefs about poverty. He asserted that accumulation of wealth for the good of the community was not bad. However, wealth should be accompanied by sober life. With such views, Calvinism represented a new strand in Protestantism which later became known as the 'Protestant ethic'. Calvinism spread to many areas in Europe and became quite influential, particularly in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Scotland, and England. Owing to its importance in terms of ideas and influence, Calvinism has also been called as the 'Second Reformation'.

3.2.2 Counter-Reformation

Faced with a serious threat to its authority, the Catholic Church tried to prepare its response to Protestantism as well as to reform itself from within. The Council of Trent, convened in 1545, eliminated the possibility of reconciliation by completely rejecting the Protestant ideas as heresies and anathema, and rejected the idea of marriage of clerics. It reaffirmed faith in the seven sacraments, the Eucharist, and in the authority of the Pope and the bishops, in the purgatory and power of indulgences.

The most aggressive response to Protestant Reformation was offered by the formation of the Jesuits. The founder of this group was Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), a Spanish nobleman, who wanted to re-establish Catholic orthodoxy throughout Europe through 'spiritual conversion'. He founded the Society of Jesus which was given official sanction by the Pope in 1540. The Jesuits underwent rigorous training and became aggressive crusaders for Counter-Reformation and they grew in number. They had contributed enormously in successful re-conversion of Poland to Catholicism, and in the success of the Catholic Reformation in Austria and German-speaking areas. They also went for preaching to various parts in the world.

The increasing tension between the states owing allegiance to Catholicism and Protestantism respectively was brought down by the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 which put forward the compromise that the religion of the ruler in respective states of the Holy Roman Empire would be the religion of the people and those not willing to adhere to it might migrate to other areas. In 1600, in Europe there were about 42 million people in regions identified as Catholic, about 28 million people under some form of Protestantism and about 28 million in the areas of Orthodox churches. During this period, loyalty to a particular Church signified loyalty to the reigning monarch.

Although some peace was achieved in 1555, the tension between the two broad Christian religions continued to simmer. The respective push for influence on the people and princes often brought them into conflict. Many small-scale conflicts, sometimes accompanied by a lot of brutality, kept occurring intermittently. The ambitions of political authorities also played a role in exacerbating the tension. In 1618, this long-drawn tension flared up into a long war – the Thirty-year War (1618-48) – which involved most of Europe and proved to be very devastating. Finally, the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) established a settlement whereby religious and political influences were territorially demarcated until the French Revolution.

By the late seventeenth century, the broad pattern of association between religion, state and the population had become marked. Italy, Spain, Portugal, France,

Ireland, Belgium and much of Eastern Europe were strongly Catholic. England, Scotland, Holland, Germany, and Scandinavian countries were largely Protestant of various denominations. Russia, parts of Eastern Europe and parts of the Balkan countries belonged to the Orthodox Churches.

By the mid-seventeenth century, institutional Protestantism manifested as much doctrinal rigidity as Catholicism. Lutheranism now became closely identified with particular political powers. It became quite narrow in its outlook and discriminated against other Protestant sects such as Calvinism. Even Calvinism displayed equally strong predilection for absolutism and tyrannical orthodoxy. The Calvinist Geneva was an example for growing religious rigidity and submission to political authority.

This period also saw a concentrated attempt by both the Protestants and Catholics to wean people away from what they described as superstitions. In fact, efforts were made by the religious and intellectual elite to distinguish between the orthodox Christianity and the popular 'superstitious' versions of it, accompanied by intense efforts to convince the people about the supposed sinfulness of their religious belief-systems. Both these major forms of Christianity in Europe launched massive educational ventures to teach people about their uniform systems of beliefs and practices. Thus, so far as the popular religious culture, particularly related to magic, was concerned, the Catholics and Protestants presented a common front despite their otherwise sharp doctrinal differences.

Although the multiplicity of ideas and affiliations emerged even among the Catholics in the post-Reformation period, it was among the Protestants that the variety of ideas and organizations was staggering. There were numerous sects which emerged within a century of Reformation, all having their own ideas about Christianity and modes of salvation. It is these reformist sects that we are going to discuss in the next sections.

3.3 DISSENTERS AND NON-CONFORMISTS ON EUROPEAN CONTINENT

Although overwhelming majority of Europeans were associated with mainstream churches, such as Catholic, Lutheran, or Calvinist, there emerged many radical reformist groups on the margins. Inspired by Protestant revolt, but aware of the limitations of Protestantism, these marginal groups attempted to put forward their own ideology and establish their own churches. These religious movements differed from medieval heterodox sects in their emphasis on individual choice and voluntary association with the church. They rejected infant baptism, and believed in adult baptism and self-selection into the religious fold as radically different from hereditary or imposed religious affiliation. But these movements were also different from the post-Enlightenment self-selecting liberal churches in terms of their beliefs in some form of millenarianism and the willingness to sacrifice one's life for religious beliefs. Many of these radical sect held apocalyptic beliefs which implied that the end of the world was near and in which there would be a victory of the forces of God over the forces of evil.

These small or relatively large groups who professed Christian faith in general but dissociated from any big established Christian Church may be called as 'dissenters and non-conformists'. Dissent means doctrinal conflict with orthodoxy,

while non-conformism implies deviation from orthodox practice. Such groups were also castigated by the established churches as religious deviants. Clearly, such terms are relative because it was the norm set by the state churches which decided the issue of deviance. However, continued and intense religious activities by these groups resulted in the founding of 'free churches' of various sizes in Europe.

One of the first radical reformist movements to emerge in the wake of Luther's revolt in 1517 was 'Anabaptism' which endeavoured to thoroughly reconstruct the Christian community. Anabaptism means 'rebaptism' in Greek. Its followers believed that only those persons could follow the true Christian religion who knew what it meant in moral and ethical terms and were willing to accept their duties and obligations. Since it was not possible for the infants to comprehend the implications of religion, only willing adults should be allowed for baptism. It was noticed quite early in Germany, Switzerland, and Holland since the early 1520s onwards, in Italy from about 1540, and in Poland since 1565. In 1524, the Anabaptists rejected the practice of infant baptism and insisted on adult baptism. By 1525, they had broken from the mainstream Protestant Church. Its idea of an independent and voluntary church went against the Catholic order as well as against Protestant conceptualization of a national church. The role of the Anabaptists in the development of religious dissent in Europe was considerable.

There were many Anabaptist groups which were not uniform in ideology and organization. However, they advocated a form of congregational organization because they believed in voluntary membership rather than according to birth or territory. Propelled by religious thinkers in some parts of Germany and Switzerland, this sect rejected the emphasis given by both Catholicism and Protestantism to the community as a whole rather than to individuals. The Anabaptists believed that the real religious experiences could only belong to the already saved individuals. Thus, only those who were fully regenerate could form part of the reformed community through the ritual of the baptism of adult believers. Because of their subversive views, the Anabaptists faced oppression both by the established Protestant church and the state. There were many strands within the broader Anabaptist movement, but two groups became prominent. The first group were the 'Mennonites' who were followers of Menno Simons and who believed in pacifism and were gathered in reclusive communities in remote parts of the Netherlands. The second group were the 'Hutterites' who practiced community living on the basis of absolute sharing of all property.

In 1534, an Anabaptist group won in the elections in the town of Munster in Germany and formed the town government. Thousands of Anabaptists from various parts of Europe arrived there under the belief that it was the 'New Jerusalem'. In Munster, the Anabaptist government confiscated all the property of Catholic Church, abolished private property, prohibited the use of money and established a system of barter. Both the Lutheran and Catholic princes in Germany combined against them, invaded Munster in June 1535, and crushed the government.

In 1524, a fierce peasant revolt occurred in many German-speaking areas involving a large number of peasants, supported by many Anabaptists. The leader of the revolt was Thomas Munzer (c. 1491-1525) who was a priest and who combined religious reform with social revolution. He strongly spoke against the Catholic Church as well as against Luther because he believed that both bowed

their heads before the lay authorities. Luther, in his turn, denounced the peasant rebels in the strongest possible terms and asked the German princes to take strong action against them. Both the Catholic and Protestant priests joined together and with the political authorities to crush the revolt in 1525 when more than 100,000 peasants were killed. Munzer was also captured and brutally killed.

Another sect which radically questioned the established Christian belief was 'Anti-trinitarianism' (similar to the later 'Unitarianism') which rejected the mainstream doctrine of the established Churches about the trinity and emphasised on the sole majesty of God. According to it, the Godhead was a unity and did not consist of a trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Anti-trinitarian belief initially arose in Italy, but later shifted to Eastern Europe due to repression. During the 1560s, they established an Anti-trinitarian church in Poland. It reached to North America in the seventeenth century. In Transylvania, an Ottoman protectorate, there developed a full-blown form of Anti-trinitarianism.

On the European continent, the Netherlands served as the hub for radical Protestant and dissenting groups. A lot of 'heterodox' literature, which influenced many people and sects in various parts of Europe and America, was also published there. One of the important dissenting movements which was influenced by such writings was 'Pietism' in Germany which was opposed to both Lutheranism and Calvinism. The Pietists were not interested in theological intricacies and aimed for a simple creed with devotional dedication. It had strong mystical tendency. It flourished in Brandenburg (Germany) towards the end of the seventeenth century with their own university, orphanage, schools, and printing presses.

The origins of Pietism in Germany has been traced to the time between 1604 and 1610 when Johann Arndt (1555-1621) published his 'Four Books of True Christianity'. It provided a broad outline of ideological orientation of Pietism. However, generally the active phase of Pietism is associated with the activities of a preacher in Frankfurt, Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), when he founded the 'Circle of the Pious' in 1670 and published his tract 'Pia Desideria' in 1675. This tract severely criticised what the Pietists considered as wrong tendencies in Lutheranism, particularly the absence of practical and active piety. It was during this time that Pietism was organized as a 'socially discernible movement that placed itself in opposition to orthodoxy and brought forth new forms of ecclesiastical and religious communal life'. To demonstrate their idea of practical piety, the Pietists actively initiated work in the field of education and schooling. They sought to create perfect individuals through active inculcation of practical piety. Their emphasis on ascetic life, promotion of thrift and hard work, opposition to luxurious life, and anti-state attitudes marked them away from the official Lutheran Protestantism. The Lutherans resented the preaching of this sect and open conflict began between Lutheran orthodoxy and Pietism around 1789-90.

'Quietism', like Pietism, was an individualist form of religion which was strongly anti-clerical and with mystical orientation. Its enunciator was the Spanish priest Miguel Molinos who became known also in Rome and Paris. He was finally persecuted by Inquisition. Quietism preached 'annihilation of all individual activity in the love of God'. Another dissenting sect which had presence in France, northern Germany and the Netherlands was 'Labadism', founded by Jean de Labadie (1610-1674). The Labadists held the common Protestant views, but they also believed in equality of sexes and the idea of shared property.

Another important heterodox sect, Jansenism flourished in France during the seventeenth century. It was named after its originator Cornelius Jansen (1585-1638), who was a theologian. Jansenism had combined elements from both Calvinism and mysticism. It emerged in the context of Counter-Reformation in France. It was pitched against the Jesuits in France and Spain. The Jesuits, in turn, attacked it and Jansenism was condemned by the Roman Catholic Church in 1642. But the Jansenists persisted and received support from important theologians in France. Although the Jansenists kept seeking legitimacy from the Catholic Church, many of their tenets were closer to Protestantism, and they were quite often condemned as Protestants in disguise by their enemies. It is true that their veneration of the Bible, their theology of justification, and their indifference towards the Baroque cult of the saints were some of important ideas resembling Protestantism. Jansenist ideas also had influence on Methodism in England. Italy, Austria, and the Netherlands also had important pockets with Jansenist influences.

The non-conformists and dissenters were divided in many sects and groups, but all these together constituted a minority in European population. Nevertheless, they made a great impact on the process of modernity. Despite their origins in Europe, these dissenting Christian sects were influential in various parts of the world. Individual choice, adult baptism, voluntary membership of a church, mutual obligation, democratic decision-making, and pluralism were important attributes cultivated by these dissenters in the process of their struggle against the established churches.

In the eighteenth century, there was generally a decline in the radicalism displayed by many sects in the previous centuries. The Enlightenment and finally the French Revolution made the sects more religiously defensive turning to relatively traditional forms. During the eighteenth century, there was also a trend towards secularization and 'privatization of piety'. The number of people attending the churches declined and there also occurred a noticeable decline in the number of wills dedicated to the churches in case of deaths. There was a growing indifference towards theological issues. By the late eighteenth century, there was a significant decline in the number of books discussing religious issues. Several European states now also began to distance from religious establishments and promoted secularization of polity.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What do you understand by Reformation? Discuss the major trends within it.

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2) Write a note on dissenting and non-conformist trends on the European continent.

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3.4 RADICAL REFORMATION IN ENGLAND

HenryVIII of England broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and established a separate Church of England in 1534 after Pope Clement VII refused to grant him permission to divorce his wife. The Church of England followed Lutheran principles but in practice it was quite conservative compared to the reformed churches on the European continent. It was very harsh on heresies and burned several dozen persons at the stakes during the 1530s. At the same time, however, there was a large-scale dissolution of Catholic monasteries and the sale of their land.

During the seventeenth century, England emerged as the hotbed of divergent metaphysical thoughts of reformist kind. Over this century, religious culture of England was completely transformed. In words of Christopher Hill:

'In 1603 all English men and women were deemed to be members of the state Church, dissent from which was a punishable offence. Heretics were still burnt at the stake, just as suspected traitors were tortured. By 1714 Protestant dissent was legally tolerated: the Church could no longer burn, the state no longer tortured. Church courts, powerful in all spheres of life since the Middle Ages, lost almost all their functions in this century. Under Charles I Archbishop Laud ruled the country; under Anne it caused a sensation when, for the last time, a Bishop was appointed to government office' [Hill 1980: 3]

The prevailing doctrine and practices of the Anglican Church were challenged by the Puritans who were deeply influenced by Calvinism, particularly its doctrine of individual predestination. Puritanism aimed at purifying the Church of England from the remaining Catholic influences. They laid enormous emphasis on individual's own comprehension of the scriptures, spiritual devotion, discipline and sacrifice. Puritanism called for an administrative revolution in the working of the English Church by completely severing its relationship with the state. It demanded the abolition of the post of Bishops, their removal from the House of Lords, and the abolition of Deans and Chapters and Church Courts. Puritanism preached integrity of the individual, service to the community, and spiritual equality of all. They repudiated the elaborate church hierarchy and rituals, and believed that honest study of Bible and integrity of individual's conscience were the most important ways to implement God's will. They also emphasised on hard productive work in one's own occupation for the welfare of the broader community. Moreover, they called for the abolition of tradition of holidays on saints' days so that more time was available for people to pursue their productive work.

In the 1570s, several Puritans pushed for separation from the Church of England and established their independent congregations in many places. Repression was launched against them and they migrated to the Netherlands in 1582. Some of their leaders, such as Robert Browne (ca. 1550-1633) and Robert Harrison (ca. 1545-1585) believed that instead of being hereditary, the true church should be a voluntary community of believers who followed God's commandments, upheld high moral values, and believed in brotherhood.

However, the majority of the Puritans still remained inside the Church of England trying to reform it from within. Yet, they were described as 'non-conformists' because they did not follow certain accepted practices of the Church. There were also the radicals within them who eschewed the established churches altogether and organized 'gathered churches' for the believers who were supposed to be chosen. Fragmentation frequently occurred with more and more radical sects being formed with lesser number of adherents. Most of them tried to maintain distance from the temporal authorities. The mid-seventeenth century provided them opportunity as the state seemed to be disintegrating giving these sects a lot of freedom of operation. The growth of Puritan sects during the English Civil War (1642-51) was enormous.

On the whole, Puritanism can be described as a movement of reform and renewal within the state church in England. The Puritans more rigorously believed in 'Biblical piety' and a return to the original Christianity. They also more sharply distinguished themselves from Catholicism than the adherents of the state church. In fact, they did not even regard Catholicism as a religion but as a form of priestly despotism. Puritanism has also been regarded by Max Weber and others as believing in a special occupational ethic with strong emphasis on manual work and ascetic and thrifty life which generated a 'spirit of capitalism'.

There developed another dissenting sect among the English. John Smyth (1555-1612) formed an independent congregation in 1606 which asserted its separatism from the established churches. After repression, the members of this sect shifted to the Netherlands in 1608. They were the Baptists who believed in voluntary baptism and they formally declared themselves as such in 1609 in Amsterdam. The theological principles of the Baptism were subversive of the state church of England. Moreover, if people were free to choose their own church, the payment of compulsory tithe to the state church (which was 10 per cent of income) was completely illogical. So, the Baptists as well as others rejected the demand for tithe and during the Civil War many of them refused to pay.

Now the principle of productive work and the priesthood of all believers were extended to the clergy in the state church, particularly during the 1640s. It was argued that the clergy should subsist not on compulsory tithes but on voluntary contribution of the believers. If this was not enough the priests should do productive manual work like others. Many sects believed that the priests should be elected by the congregation and should be paid by voluntary contributions. Some of them denied the very need for a separate class of priests and claimed that even layman could preach. They favoured tolerance for all radical protestant sects.

Another important religious movement, in terms of the number of followers, was Quakerism. It was founded by George Fox (1624-1691) who was an itinerant preacher and who had earlier come under the influence of Baptism. He covered

the whole of England several times in the course of his preaching during which he was imprisoned many times and even attacked by the hostile mobs. He was quite successful in uniting a large number of individuals in North England who were not satisfied with existing churches. Quakers' main influence in the early phase was among the agricultural population many of whom had fought against the landlords during the Civil War. Thus, besides being a radical religious movement, Quakerism was also a movement of political and social protests. From the mid-1650s, the Quaker movement spread in other part of England and it soon surpassed the Baptists in terms of the number of followers.

So far as their ideology was concerned, the Quakers were in line with many other radical sects existing at that time. They condemned the clergy of the established churches, rejected the conventional churches as meeting places for true Christians, and firmly believed in the doctrine of inner light which meant that the pure and the holy persons could directly receive the inspiration from God. They also believed that the true believers had the possibility of becoming Christ-like by the true inner divine inspiration.

The Quakers eschewed the conventional forms of symbolism and behaviour current in the English society of the day. They refused to take off their hats to anyone, rejected the usual names for days and months, and refused to swear oaths. The fear of the Quakers to establish the rule of the pious through violent means was a factor in motivating the leading classes to bring about the restoration of the monarchy.

Another group, the 'Levellers', emerged as one of the most radical groups demanding equality based on natural rights. They declared that reason was the fountainhead of all demands of justice. Later, another group emerged under the leadership of Gerrard Winstanley calling itself as 'true levellers'. Later, its followers were termed as 'Diggers' because they believed in economic equality and engaged in the practice of digging common land. Winstanley completely rejected traditional religion and wrote against clergy with more vehemence than any other writer during the Civil War. He very strongly rooted for human freedom from bondage of all kinds. He wrote that it was the inner conscience of human beings which would free them from bondage. There was no outside God and, according to Hill, Winstanley 'came to use the word Reason in preference to God' [Hill 1975: 141].

Another sect was termed as 'Familists, members of the Family of Love'. Their leader was Henry Niclaes, born in Munster (Germany) in 1502. The Familists believed that heaven and hell were to be found in this world and that human beings could again inhabit this earth in a state of innocence that had existed before the Fall. They also believed in common property as it was nature which produced everything. They believed that God was in every man and thus all men were equal. In England, Familism was spread by Christopher Vittels and it became a significant sect during the English Civil War. However, it rapidly declined soon after the Restoration and some of its members joined the Quakers.

Many dissenting sects emerged or derived inspiration from Anabaptism. One sect named 'Pilgrim Fathers' emerged from an alliance between the Dutch and English Anabaptists. Another sect was called the 'Fifth Monarchists' who believed that rebellion against the existing regime was necessary to establish the rule of God on earth. Some of the groups such as 'Ranters' and the 'Family of Love'

considered orgies as the path towards salvation. In many cases, therefore, these radical sects displayed defiance of political and social norms. Resistance appeared in many forms. Quite often the followers of these sects refused to pay tithes to the mainstream churches. Thus, social and political radicalism often accompanied religious radicalism. The religious freedom available during the Civil War and under Cromwell was unparalleled in Europe of this period. So, many sects, particularly the Baptists and the Quakers took advantage of this and expanded their membership enormously. The Quakers were even perceived as a threat to the state in their steadfast refusal to conform to religious and social traditions, and their radical rejection of the clergy, conventional sacraments, and even the church buildings (which they pejoratively called as 'steeple houses'). The idea of the end of the world and the coming of the new world with Jesus Christ as king was quite popular among many sects.

In England, the restoration under Charles II (1630-1685) did away with the liberties and rights granted earlier to the religious non-conformists. Several laws enacted between 1661 and 1665 were instrumental in the persecution of the Puritans and many other sects. Many groups faced active social and political exclusion by the state and the parliament forcing many of their adherents to migrate to the Netherlands and other places in Europe, as well as to North America. In particular, the Quakers, who had developed enormously during the 1650s, were vigorously persecuted. In 1662, the Quaker Act was passed which discriminated against the dissenters in a comprehensive manner.

Christopher Hill summarises this period of retreat as follows:

'The great period of freedom of movement and freedom of thought was over. For 20 years men had trudged backwards and forwards across Great Britain, in the Army, in search of work, in the service of God…. Preaching tinkers returned to their villages, or like Bunyan went to gaol. Levellers, Diggers, Ranters and Fifth Monarchists disappeared, leaving hardly a trace…. Fox disciplined the Quakers: they succumbed to the protestant ethic. Property triumphed. Bishops returned to a state church, the universities and tithes survived. Women were put back into their place. The island of Great Bedlam became the island of Great Britain, God's confusion yielding place to man's order' [Hill 1975: 378-79].

The militancy and millenarianism of the revolutionary years gradually gave way to introspection among the adherents of these radical sects. The division among them, then defeat and more divisions led to the realisation that the expected God's kingdom did not belong to this world. So, after Restoration quietist and pacifist tendencies came to the fore among these sects. One revealing example were the Quakers who turned complete pacifists after an early phase of militant millenarianism. Facing persecution by the established churches and the allied governments, many sect members fled to Americas where they found more suitable atmosphere to spread their message.

The persecution faced by non-conformist sects after Restoration came to an end after the Glorious Revolution which gave rise to a spirit of tolerance. The Toleration Act of 1689 ensured, at least in theory, that freedom of religious practice was granted to the dissenters even though they continued to be excluded from holding public office and from educational institutions. In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the number of the followers of the dissenting sects stood at about six per cent of the population. In this period, there emerged a powerful religious movement known as 'Methodism'.

Methodist movement was founded by John Wesley (1703-1791). It emerged as an independent movement particularly because of Wesley's zeal of preaching. Methodism preached piety, hard work, and thrift. However, its popular appeal might also have consisted in its openness towards supernatural phenomenon like magic as well as towards religiously motivated emotionalism. Among its members the skilled workers predominated forming about half of the number. Initially, Methodism existed as a reform movement within the established church in England, but it finally was able to found its own separate church.

Since Methodism was a large mass movement, its role in preventing a radicalisation of English working classes and people in general was quite significant. The influence of the French Revolution, which was felt all over Europe, was not discernible in England due to the conservative influence wielded by Methodist preachers. In fact, historians have noted the gradual integration of the dissenters, such as the Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, Quakers, and Methodists into the conservative social and political structures in England.

Despite the repression on religious freedom unleashed during the period of Restoration, many of the radical religious ideas survived. In some form or the other, these radical sects managed sufficient following to ensure that non-conformity remained an important aspect of religious, social, and political life of England. Increasingly asserting their independence, such non-conformist sects were able to increase their membership in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries because of their flexible institutional structure and their ideology of voluntary membership and free entrepreneurship. It has been estimated that, in 1711, one out of six persons in London was a dissenter. By mid-nineteenth century, the number of people attending the non-established or 'Free Churches' stood at 20 per cent of the total population in Great Britain. It meant that the number of people adhering to the non-conformist churches was about one half of the total church-going population. In Britain, the term non-conformism slowly replaced the term dissent, and the rising middle classes showed preference towards the non-conformist sects.

3.5 RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

The Protestant Reformation was a very comprehensive phenomenon seriously influencing political, social, and intellectual situation of Europe. Thus, while in the beginning of sixteenth century, Europe generally appeared to present a uniform religious picture, by 1600 it stood as thoroughly divided not only between Catholics and Protestants, but also between various sects, each trying to assert its independence from the others. Even among the Catholics there occurred certain rethinking and change in institutional structure. Such sentiments did not remain confined to the elite but reached down to the popular levels. This gave rise to diversity in European religious culture at an unprecedented level. A large number of small and large groups existed openly professing their ideologies through oral and print mediums. Within Protestant Reformation, diversity was quite common, but even within Catholicism new forms of diversity emerged. Both Catholicism and Protestantism at the official levels tried to put down doctrinal diversity through persecution and repression in collaboration with the political authorities. Yet, religious diversity continued to flourish in many ways, finally winning by the late seventeenth century. Dissent and non-conformism in seventeenth-century

Europe was characterised by a wide network and it also witnessed a lot of pluralism and fragmentation.

There existed a lot of differences among the reformist sects resulting in some amount of friction among them. Their opposition to officially supported religions was quite obviously marked. However, there also existed a great amount of openness and tolerance in these sects about doctrinal questions than was possible for the established, state-supported orthodox religions. The atmosphere of religious toleration consciously or unconsciously created by a large variety of radical reformist sects provided the opportunity for the Enlightenment to successfully appeal for religious toleration in general, even tolerance for non-religious ideas and people.

In England, during the Civil War and soon after, according to Chirstopher Hill, 'the representatives of the New Model Army, London Levellers and radical divines, all show a degree of tolerance astonishing for the age' [Hill 1975: 364]. Some of the groups such as the Levellers had a democratic vision which contained religious tolerance as a central element. The religious radicals during this period also believed in the holy spirit existing within each individual and they emphasized on 'one's own experienced truth as against traditional truth handed down by others' [Hill 1975: 368].

A great amount of religious conflict took place in Europe resulting in huge loss of life. But, by the mid seventeenth century, it was commonly decided that tolerance was the best way of decent survival. It is also possible to find a pattern of secularisation in the strict dissociation of most of these sects from the state. They considered religion to be an individual matter which should be kept apart from the interference from the state.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Discuss some of the important radical reformist sects in England.

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2) What is the contribution of the radical religious sects to European modernity?

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3.6 LET US SUM UP

European religious life was torn apart by the Protestant Reformation in early sixteenth century. This resulted in almost continuous religious conflict for more than a century at various levels. Protestantism was marked by multiple divisions and was challenged by more radical currents collectively designated as 'Radical Reformation'. These radical groups proliferated and were found all over Europe, many of its members migrating to other parts of the world, particularly to North America. The dissent and non-conformism of these radical groups continued until the late eighteenth century when, faced with Enlightenment secularisation and French revolutionary upheavals, most of them retreated to conservative positions.

However, radicalism in the religious culture of Europe signified not only challenges to religious hierarchy but also challenges to social and political hierarchies. Due to various factors, but also owing to the variety of radical religious sects, the European religious life became quite diverse and accepted tolerance as a policy by the late seventeenth century. The diversity and radicalism of these religious sects also fed into many later secular and egalitarian ideologies.

3.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) See Section 3.2
2) See Section 3.3

Check Your Progress 2

1) See Section 3.4
2) See Section 3.5

UNIT 4 INTELLECTUAL CURRENTS IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE*

Structure

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you:

- will be able to broadly comprehend the background which resulted in intense intellectual activities in the seventeenth century;
- can understand the important intellectual trends during seventeenth century; and
- will be able to explain the views held by various thinkers in this period.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The seventeenth century was the period when the intellectual roots of Western modernity were laid down. It was a time full of intense activities at all levels – religious, social, political and intellectual. Widespread religious wars devastated Europe leading to a lot of misery. At the same time, it also resulted in the reorganisation of socio-religious life and polities. It was also a century full of intellectual activities. Political, social and philosophical thoughts of various kinds emerged and spread. In a certain sense, the seventeenth century can be said to be the herald of European modernity in thought. It is, therefore, important to explore the variety of intellectual currents in this period.

The three main trends which broadly encompassed the intellectual life of seventeenth-century Europe were scepticism, rationalism, and empiricism. Conventionally, there are certain thinkers associated with each of them, but it is possible to find that the trends were more important than the thinkers. Some elements of each trend may be discerned in each of the major thinkers of that period. Here, however, we will study the trend along with the major thinkers generally associated with them because those particular ideas found better expression in these individuals.

*Resource Person : Prof. S. B. Upadhyay

Although here we will discuss the seventeenth-century intellectual history in terms of certain important trends and some important individuals, it is necessary to understand that they were not working in vacuum. There existed vast networks of cooperative thinking stretching all over Europe but also to Americas and certain parts of Asia. It became a normal practice for intellectuals in seventeenth-century Europe to participate in networks of correspondence of various dimensions. So, the ideas generated out of or tested within such networks pointed to their collective origins rather than the product of a few original minds.

4.2 THE INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

The Renaissance, Reformation and the rise of modern science provided the intellectual background for the emergence of a vigorous and widespread intellectual culture in seventeenth-century Europe. Whereas the earlier intellectual movements remained largely confined to the intellectual elites or religious sects, the seventeenth century witnessed the participation of relatively larger section of the European population in secular intellectual activities.

The Renaissance was an intellectual movement which began in Italy in the fourteenth century and from there it spread to almost all regions of Europe. It continued in various forms for over two centuries leading to enormous changes in the intellectual culture of Europe. In contrast to the medieval European thought which had considered God as the centre of the universe, Renaissance thinkers put 'Man' in the centre of the world. This philosophical shift is known as 'humanism'. This was the most important philosophical contribution of the Renaissance to human thought. Some other significant developments in intellectual sphere which were initiated during this period were secularism, individualism, and realism. All these developments in literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, philosophy, and political thinking were to have great influence on the making of the modern West.

Another important development, though in religious sphere, was the Reformation which reoriented the religious thinking and culture as established by the Catholic Church. Martin Luther (1483-1546) radically questioned the thought and practices of the Catholic Church and criticised it for not adhering to the original Christian doctrines. Luther, Martin Bucer (1491-1551), Jean Calvin (1509-64), John Foxe (1516-87), and other leaders established what became known as Protestantism. The scholars associated with the Catholic Church responded to the intellectual and religious challenges posed by Protestantism. This clash between the two main Christian sects produced a lot of intellectual ferment which ultimately influenced even non-religious thought in Europe.

Another very important development during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the rise of modern science which had a much deeper influence. Modern science began with a quiet reformulation of cosmology. In 1543, Copernicus published his book on the movement of the stars. His idea of the earth orbiting around the sun overturned the entire traditional wisdom about the relationship between the earth and the rest of the solar system. Kepler, Galileo, and Newton were some of the towering figures within the movement also known as the scientific revolution. Their ideas about the universe completely unsettled the received wisdom for a very long time in the West. The rise of modern science slowly spread the idea that it was the sun, and not the earth, which was the centre

of our solar system. Moreover, the universe, of which the solar system was a part, was infinite in space. Then laws of motion were discovered which conveyed the idea that movement of the objects in the universe, including that of humans, was not due to divine will or intervention. Rather such movements had their own laws which were common to all. The role of divine principles in the working of the universe was replaced by the ideas of cause and effect which were physical in nature. These laws could be understood by observation and analysis rather than by divine revelation. Thus, the new range of scientific discoveries brought out a huge universe with innumerable patterns which raised severe doubts on traditional Christian world-view which no longer appeared to tally either with the newly discovered facts or with the logical reasoning. Truth was no longer conceived as finite or narrow. All these developments had a lot of impact on the intellectual culture of modern Europe.

4.3 SCEPTICISM

The seventeenth century began with a deep sense of scepticism towards traditionally received wisdom. Questions were raised not only towards the broadly religious (Christian) medieval period, but also towards the Renaissance's glorification of the ancients. The second theme acquired greater poignancy during the late sixteenth century with many intellectuals raising doubts about the continuing validity of teachings received from the ancient Greeks and Romans. Jean Bodin and Michel de Montaigne were two important intellectuals who radically questioned the primacy of the ancients.

In a general sense, scepticism means a doubt or disbelief which is manifested in our daily interaction. However, as a system of thought it connotes a systematic expression of uncertainty, suspicion, and disbelief towards any organized understanding of the world. Scepticism is generally understood as an attitude which is opposed to dogmatism which follows a certain creed with a claim to fully know and explain the reality. Elements of scepticism can be found in all philosophical systems as they doubt the validity of the preceding or rival philosophies. But at a larger and far-reaching level, scepticism raises doubts over everything and believes that no final version of reality and truth can be available in any matter.

Historically, scepticism may be said to have originated in ancient Greek philosophy. Socrates and later Pyrrho of Ellis (c. 355-275 BCE) have been considered as the founders of two different versions of scepticism – academic scepticism and Pyrrhonism. Socrates only asked questions and interrogated existing thoughts and beliefs. He never provided a system of thought of his own. Later Arcesilaus and Carneades reinforced what has been called 'academic scepticism'. It did not reject all knowledge and tended to rely on probable knowledge as the whole truth could never be available.

Pyrrhonism in a systematic form can be traced to the works of Sextus Empiricus (second century CE). His books such as *Outlines of Pyrrhonism, Against the Dogmatists,* and *Against the Mathematicians* set the tone for its later development. According to Sextus, 'skepticism was not a philosophy but rather a way of life in which one opposed all claims to truth with equal opposite claims' [*Laursen*: p. 2211]. Sextus argued that the same thing or phenomenon appeared differently '(1) to different animals, (2) to different individuals, (3) to different senses, (4)

to the same sense in different conditions, (5) in different positions or places, (6) in company with different things, (7) in different quantities, (8) in different relations, (9) if common or if rare, and (10) to people with different customs or ways of life' [Laursen: p. 2211]. Thus, any claim could be countered by equally valid counter-claim. This situation could lead to suspension of judgement or decision. He suggested that one could live without taking a stand on the reality of a phenomenon and could follow one's own customs and rules.

Modern scepticism originated in the sixteenth century. It came into being due to big economic and cultural changes. The coming into prominence of ancient Geek texts in the course of the Renaissance and the exploration of the world by the Europeans resulting in the gathering of various forms of knowledge led to serious questioning of European medieval ideologies about universe and society. The modern science and modern philosophy could emerge only through the process of scepticism towards all forms of received knowledge. Even further, some of them questioned the possibility of any certain form of knowledge whatsoever. By the early seventeenth century, Christian scepticism had acquired a respectable position, particularly among the Catholic theologians. In general, scepticism had become so widespread in France that it began to invite fierce attacks from those who believed that it was undermining faith, and from those who viewed it as dangerous for knowledge.

During this period, scepticism usefully served to profess a variety of political positions from radicalism to conservatism. Montaigne and Hobbes both made use of scepticism for contrary arguments. Thus, while Montaigne's writings were at times quite subversive to rulers, Hobbes argued that since it was difficult to arrive at the truth, it was not possible to agree to a common action by people, and therefore the ruler should be given powers to define and decide about the truth and punish those who deviate from his version of the truth.

Descartes began as a total sceptic denying all received knowledge either through tradition or sense-experiences. The only trustworthy entity was the thinking mind which was capable of producing confirmed knowledge through a deductive process. Ultimately, Descartes proposed to achieve the truth. However, if one were to include the existence of God, thinking mind, and the possibility of deduction within his thoroughly sceptical methodology, it could inexorably lead absolute scepticism.

Pierre-Daniel Huet (1630-1721) and Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) were considered as sceptics. Huet questioned Descartes' attempt to establish his own system claiming to know the truth. Pierre Bayle, on his part, criticised all philosophies, systems of thought, and historical scholarship in his massive work *Historical and Critical Dictionary* (1697-1702). Bayle's works and that of La Mothe Le Vayer's *On the Small Amount of Certainty in History* (1668) reinforced scepticism in historical field by bringing out a lot of mistakes in historical works. They argued that a probable reality should be accepted instead of claiming absolute certainty. Bayle's *Dictionary* was one of the crowning achievements of scepticism drawing on all its strands to elaborately question historical, religious, and metaphysical knowledge. His scepticism brought to the surface the underlying defects of these knowledge-forms making certainty almost impossible. Bayle provided intellectual weapons to the Enlightenment thinkers for their attacks on received wisdom.

Scepticism made significant inroads in the field of religion as well. Spinoza (1596-1676) and Richard Simon (1638-1712) raised questions about the Bible. The religious people, in their turn, accused the sceptics of atheism, libertinism, and immorality. However, scepticism was quite frequently used by religious leaders and writers to discredit their opponents. Thus, Christians raised doubts about pagan creeds, the Protestants about Catholics and vice versa, and even within Protestantism the Lutherans questioned the Calvinists, and so on. The sceptics pointed out the weak foundation of the knowledge of the rival sects. In fact, during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the radical questioning of rival sects in the Christian world was quite common. Scepticism towards rival religions and sects suited the religious persons quite well and Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) in France went so far as to Christianize scepticism by arguing that it might strongly support Christianity if it was properly understood.

So, it is interesting that scepticism was used by rationalists, empiricists, and even theologians to question others who were opposed to their own theories.

4.4 RATIONALISM

Rationalism is generally considered as the mode of thinking which emphasizes that pure reason can function as a source of our knowledge without being restricted by our concrete experiences. Rationalism conceives of 'the human cognitive faculties as distinguished into the pure intellect, the senses, and the imagination. The pure intellect was the faculty that enabled human beings to gain knowledge. Rationalism may be defined as the view that substantive truths about the nature of reality may be derived from the pure intellect alone, operating independently of the imagination and the senses' [*New Dictionary of Ideas*: p. 2009]. Rationalism explicitly or implicitly maintained it was possible to comprehend the nature of truth and reality by means of a priori reasoning. This reasoning was independent of the sense-experiences.

The great Greek philosopher Plato is regarded as the originator of rationalism. Later, the Christian philosopher St. Augustine synthesized Plato with Christian thinking. Rationalism emerged as one of the most powerful currents of thought during the seventeenth century. It was **Rene Descartes (1596-1650)**, a French philosopher, who formulated the main ideas of rationalism in modern times. Although rationalism existed since long back and continued later, the period of the rationalist movement in philosophy is generally considered to be from 1637 (the year of publication of Descartes' *Discourse on Method*) to 1716 (when Leibniz died).

Descartes is widely regarded as first modern philosopher as well as the initiator of philosophical idealism by giving supreme importance to human mind and implying that human mind was known prior to any physical object. Starting with the expression of thorough scepticism towards all existing knowledge, Descartes systematically criticised the traditional conceptions of the nature and world. After this radical rejection, he looked for something which was indubitably certain, which could not be doubted. This he found in the statement 'I think, therefore I am' which he regarded as unquestionable. Beginning with this irrefutable foundation, and relying on mathematical certainties, Descartes sought to re-establish the basis of an objective and rational world in philosophy. He proposed that one should begin with the first principle whose truth is beyond doubt and

then through deductive method the entire system of knowledge should be constructed. In his theory of knowledge, experience, induction, experiment etc. were all redundant. Knowledge could be produced by the deductive reasoning of the mind.

Descartes' philosophy is materialist because it endeavours to explain all phenomena in terms of matter in motion. He thought that all objects, including human bodies, were made of invisibly tiny particles which were combined and arranged in various ways. All changes in nature and society occurred due to motion and consequent re-arrangement among these particles. However, these changes were not arbitrary but happened according to certain natural laws. The collision of particles transferred motion from one particle to another and so on. Descartes' system is so materialist that he did not even allow for space between the particles. Thus, the entire Cartesian universe is full of particles without any empty space.

According to Descartes, all objects possessed two qualities: extension (which meant their dimensions of length, height and breadth) and motion. Moreover, it was possible to reduce the world to two essential substances – mind or 'thinking substance' and matter or 'extended substance'. All objects were made of particles which were infinitely divisible and there was no vacuum anywhere as the 'subtle matter' filled all spaces. Due the movement of the particles, gaps were created which allowed the light and heat. Descartes also proposed his laws of motion. The first law stipulated that the things maintained their present state of rest or motion until something made them change it. The second law of motion was that every object moved in a straight line until its course was changed due to encounter with other objects.

Descartes believed in mechanistic philosophy which proposed a dualism between nature and God. It presented nature as a mechanical model whose main elements were matter and motion. The conception of nature as completely inert and of God as completely above and distinct from nature, and a radical separation of mind and body were the hallmarks of his philosophy. He believed that his explanatory system would be able to explain every 'visible or perceptible' phenomenon in the universe. However, to many it appeared as speculative because all explanation was based on the imperceptible movements of invisible particles which could not be tested.

Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), a Dutch philosopher and follower of Descartes, developed a system of philosophy that can be said to be the purest example of rationalism. While his contemporary and preceding rationalists kept believing in God and religion, Spinoza was accused of being atheist, who thought that it was not God but human beings whose actions were relevant for society. Like other rationalists, Spinoza rejected all sensory data of experience as random and irrelevant for an understanding of the nature of universe. According to him, there existed just one substance which one might call 'God or nature'. This was the substance which then formed essential part of all the things existing in the world. He also held a determinist view of the world. According to him, the occurrence of all events and making of all things were pre-determined by God. In fact, even God as the creator had no independent volition and had to act as per His own nature to produce the existing things in the world.

Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716) was a German philosopher and mathematician. According to Leibniz, the universe possessed a rational order which was possible to grasp by human minds. In other words, the whole of the universe was intelligible to human intellect. He developed a theory about an original substance he termed as 'monads' in his book *Monadology*. He thought that monads were the only genuine substances in the world. Leibniz disagreed with Newton's idea that God occasionally intervened in the process of running the universe. He believed that universe was also infinite in space and time. Once set in motion by God, the universe as well as the bodies of the animals and humans ran like clocks and according to mathematical laws. No further divine intervention was required for the universe and earth to function.

The rationalist tradition from Descartes to Leibniz suggested, explicitly or implicitly, that although God existed, the humanity could function without God.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Why was scepticism so widespread during the seventeenth century?

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2) Discuss the rationalist philosophy of Descartes.

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4.5 EMPIRICISM

The speculative nature of the rationalist philosophies of Descartes and his successors received sharp challenge from the empiricist and experimental philosophy, particularly concentrated in seventeenth-century England. In Europe, there had been a traditional separation between rationalism and empiricism. While the rationalism flourished mostly in France, empiricism took roots largely in Britain.

Empiricism, in its basic form, claims that all knowledge about world derived from sense perceptions. In other words, our experiences of our surroundings through five sense organs form the basis for all forms of knowledge. Experiences form the boundaries beyond which our knowledge cannot reach. Experience alone is the originator and justification of all knowledge in the world. The knowledge derived from custom, tradition, revelation, and metaphysical speculations cannot form the basis of true knowledge. The empiricists reject the knowledge which is not derived from human sense-experiences and which is not verifiable.

In Western philosophy, the Greek sophists are considered as the earliest empiricists. Aristotle is also considered to be the founder of empiricism at a higher philosophical level. In medieval Europe, Thomas Aquinas is regarded as an empiricist because he believed in the primacy of senses as the source of knowledge and who stated that 'there is nothing in the intellect that is not first in the senses'. Francis Bacon is considered to be a precursor of empiricism in modern times. However, John Locke (1632-1704), George Berkeley (1685-1753), David Hume (1711-1776) in Britain are generally regarded as the most important empiricist philosophers. In this section, we will consider only Bacon, Gassendi, and Locke.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Bacon was among those philosophers in modern times who first propounded a new experimental philosophy by combining experience and reason. Bacon rejected arguments based on traditional metaphysics, philosophy and science, and called for 'a total reconstruction of sciences, arts and all human knowledge'. He emphasized on the inductive method which meant proceeding from sense-experiences and experiments to generalizations. Although he believed in religion, yet he thought that the real knowledge of the universe would be gathered by scientific experiments and not by religious revelations. He believed that the realm of science was different from that of religion.

According to Bacon, all human knowledge derived from the experiences of human senses. He divided the human knowledge into three categories: knowledge of God, of nature, of human beings. He believed that without experiences it was not possible to obtain knowledge and that knowledge could not be produced solely by the power of mind. However, Bacon gave due weight and authority to the human reasoning. Without a reasoning mind, the sense-experiences would not make any coherent knowledge. Thus, a rational mind was important for turning experiences into various forms of knowledge. Yet, generalization and systematization on the basis of inadequate data of experience would not be successful and would remain speculative.

Bacon had an ambitious scheme to devise a new method for the natural sciences. He presented this in his book *New Organon*. This method had two parts: one is to lay the foundation by systematically collecting facts, and the second is that of construction of knowledge through inductive method. The inductive method was one of Bacon's major contributions to scientific understanding of nature. His method was also supposed to be applicable to the study of human society. However, he distinguished between the study of God-made universe which was accessible only through divine revelation and knowledge received from sense experiences. Nevertheless, he thought that the study of nature (God's creation) was not against religion as it was not actually worshipping nature, nor was it for power or profit. The study of nature and the pursuit of science were basically for the service of humanity.

Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655)

Gassendi, a French thinker, was known for his bitter controversy with Descartes over the tenets of rationalism from the standpoint of theoretical empiricism. His *Objections* (1644) to Descartes' *Meditations* is regarded as his statement on empiricism. Although Gassendi did not reject the role of mind, he considered

sense-experiences as the measure of truth, even if they could not fully explain the causes of phenomena or nature of objects. The knowledge gathered from sense-experiences were important in understanding a lot of things in everyday life. This might not enable us to reach the inner core of nature or things, but it could certainly give us some glimpse of the truth. Truth is generally hidden behind appearances, but one could get to it through certain signs which one could perceive outwardly. For example, the pores in the body are hard to see, but sweat indicates their presence in our skin. Another example is that the heat of the sun melts wax, while it hardens clay because the real nature of these two are different. Our sense-experiences perceive these indicative signs and on the basis of these that we can reach the truth.

John Locke (1632-1704)

John Locke is generally regarded as the first important empiricist philosopher in modern times. He was one of the greatest British philosophers and among the best in the world. During his time, the question about the validity of our knowledge about society and universe was frequently asked. The sceptics of various kinds were raising doubts over all forms of knowledge. Even religion was not spared and it was asked whether one could trust revelation as a source of knowledge, religion and morality. It became a matter of pressing concern how knowledge was acquired. Locke also referred to the prevailing intellectual pessimism and the widespread feeling that certainty of knowledge of any sort was difficult, if not impossible. Although Locke was not as assertive as Bacon about the possibility of overcoming sceptical doubts about knowledge through a search for method, he was definite that knowledge about the world was possible to achieve. At the same time, he also thought that there were limitations to our knowledge. So, although there were many things which could be known, there were many others about which our knowledge could never be complete or reliable.

Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690) is regarded as a seminal text of empiricism which argued in favour of the role of sense-experience and intuition in the formation of human knowledge. According to him, it was on experience that 'all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself'. Locke conceded that all levels of knowledge could not be derived directly from experiences. But he insisted that the beginning of all knowledge is located in experiences which provide the 'materials of knowledge'. Then the human reason works on them and transforms them into finished forms. Thus, what experiences supply are not knowledge itself but materials of knowledge. Locke worked out his empiricist theory as follows:

1) All things in the world are concrete and specific.

2) The human sense organs form the basis of all experiences. It is from these experiences of things that all simple ideas were derived.

3) The human mind is as a blank slate at birth.

4) He differentiated between two types of sense experiences: primary and secondary. Primary sense experiences related closely to the real world such as ideas of number, space, place, speed, solidity, etc. The secondary type was concerned with relatively qualitative things such as speech or sound, taste, colour, strength, etc. These were not directly and exactly matched to the reality but were dependent on mind to evaluate and then fix them.

5) Simple ideas were joined together by human mind in various combinations to form complex ideas. Finally, thoughts and theories were dependent on these ideas which were, in turn, dependent on experiences.

6) However, all knowledge was ultimately confined within the boundaries of human experiences. Even communicable language could not go beyond experiences which were responsible for generating ideas in the mind.

4.6 POLITICAL THEORIES

During the seventeenth century, new theories of state and society were formulated which significantly differed from the earlier ones. There were several philosophers all over Europe who propounded such political theories. However, here we will discuss only two main such political theorists – Hobbes and Locke.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) became famous with the publication of *De Cive* (On the Citizen, 1842), *Elements of Law* (1850), and *Leviathan* (1851). He is considered as a hard-core political realist. He sharply differed from the moralists in regarding the human beings as basically inclined to violence and theft. His most renowned argument is that the human beings moved from the state of nature to a developed form of social organization which was controlled by a sovereign with supreme power over the citizens. The state of nature was a primitive state where life was 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short'. Quarrel and warfare were the natural state of things. There was no sovereign power to keep the competitive ambitions of humans in check, and there were constant fights among them. There was no idea of justice and the justice of the jungle prevailed among the humans. In such a state of war against each other, the humans would be unable to develop materially or culturally. To escape from this constant state of tension and war, the human beings, in Hobbes' opinion, made a contract to install a sovereign who would stop or minimize the wars. Once there was a ruler, there would be a semblance of order in society.

However, it did not mean that the state was good. In fact, Hobbes thought that all governments were bad. The sovereigns would also seek more and more power. Since all persons pursued their individual self-interest and sought power for themselves, the rule of one person was better than rule of the large number. Thus, according to Hobbes, monarchy would be better than democracy because in the former it was one person's greed and power that society would have to cope with while in case of democracy, the society would have to pay for a large number of greedy persons. Even the subjects were no better than the rulers and they would cheat and break the laws whenever they could. Hobbes stated that such a behaviour on the part of the subjects was very bad because they should realize that any kind of sovereign was better than the state of anarchy which was inevitable if there were no rulers. Hobbes stipulated that only in two conditions the rulers could be resisted: one when they subjected the ruled persons to death, and second was when they failed to offer protection to their subjects. In such situation, the governed should opt for some other sovereign who would work in accordance with the contract involved in allegiance for protection. The mutual obligation between the ruler and the ruled was, Hobbes argued, a 'law of nature', and it was the 'obligation' of the people to respect the covenant through which their natural rights were surrendered in exchange for protection. On the other

hand, the rulers were also bound by certain duties, the most important being to protect their subjects.

On the political level, he completely demystified the political system or the state which he conceived as a human creation with nothing divine in it. The state was purely a humanly created and operated working machine. He also demystified human personality. According to him, the human beings were to be considered in terms of raw passion and desires, which might sometimes be moderated by the reason and instincts of self-preservation. At no point, however, the humans were to be regarded as moral or spiritual creatures, but purely utilitarian beings driven by self-interest and self-preservation. Thus, if left to themselves, as in the state of nature, the human beings would constantly fight each other. Therefore, a strong state was needed to avoid or minimize this natural state of war of all against all. The reigning sovereign should be at the top and it would be he who should be the ultimate arbiter in social, political, legal or religious disputes. Spiritual, moral and ethical considerations would play no role in determining the powers of the ruler. The ruler of Hobbes' conception was above the laws governing society. Hobbes' main thrust was to warn the scholars and the people in general about the inherent dangers in challenging the existing ruler of whatever sort.

Hobbes' biggest problem was to explain how people, who were completely self-interested, would be able to maintain the sanctity of the supposed contract by which they vowed to set up the state and continue with it. He got around it by asserting that it was the 'law of nature'.

John Locke

Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1690) was a discourse on the relationship of people with the ruler. Locke also believed that sovereignty emerged as a result of social contract by the people in order to get rid of the state of nature in which they were living. But, unlike Hobbes, Locke thought that the primitive people were not bloodthirsty savages but persons who believed that no harm should be done to other persons' life, property, and freedom. Locke's primitive people also entered into a contract to set up the state, but they conceived of a government which would not enslave them but would work for the preservation and regulation of their property and liberty. So, unlike Hobbes, Locke's primitive humans were rational and moral and the state which emerged through their contract was not repressive but representative. Such a government is based on popular consent and was not arbitrary. To maintain justice, however, Locke suggested a separation of the legislative and executive functions and powers. In this arrangement, the executive would be completely under the legislative organ of the government.

Locke believed that the government should not be arbitrary and authoritarian and that excessive power and authority of the government was immoral. He also believed that freedom of speech should not be interfered with. The rulers should exercise legitimate authority and should not exceed their rightful authority. In case of excess on the part of the ruler the people would be right to rebel. Locke rejected the divine-right monarchy and supported a constitutional government, similar to what was then prevailing in England. His gave rise to the liberal thought with emphasis on the rights of the individual and restrictions on the power of the government.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Discuss the main principles of empiricism.

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2) Write a short note on political theory of Thomas Hobbes.

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4.7 LET US SUM UP

The seventeenth century was an age of scepticism. Almost all thinkers expressed or used scepticism in one form or another. However, it was also a period by the end of which scepticism was banished to a large extent and certainty was enthroned as a matter of principle. Universal metanarratives, self-evident foundational truths, scientificity, and objectivity became deeply cherished intellectual values. During this period, modernity was also established, at least at intellectual level. Its origins can be said to lie in Descartes' philosophy, Hobbes' theory of state, and Newton's summation of modern science.

Although some intellectual ferment was discernible among the common people, it was mostly among the educated that the new intellectual currents could be found. These intellectual trends involved clear changes in the perception of society and universe. The traditional knowledge, including knowledge derived from the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, was questioned and in many cases rejected. There was also an increasing tendency to disregard the Church's right to interpret and explain the universe. And although most of these intellectuals appeared to believe in religion and God, their interpretation of these clearly differed from the traditional religious beliefs. It was during this period that new ways of thinking about nature, humanity, society, and government emerged which differed sharply from traditional and religious notions.

4.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) See Section 4.3

2) See Section 4.4

Check your Progress 2

1) See Section 4.5

2) See Section 4.6

UNIT 5 ART, CULTURE AND SOCIETY*

Structure

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- identify the main elements in cultural production during the period under study,
- relate this cultural production to the social and political changes during this period,
- see the continuities and changes between the earlier cultural trends; and how these paved the way for later developments,
- know the important names in art, architecture, music and literature during this period,
- be appreciative of the diversities in cultural trends across Europe,
- have a broad idea of the intellectual and social milieu of the period, and
- have some idea of society and its gradations and to understand why some of the advances in intellectual and cultural production expanded, yet excluded vast sections of people, and varied across classes.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

All aspects of life in any particular period of history are linked with each other. In relation to art, culture and society, the Renaissance art and other forms of cultural expression were rooted in the changes taking place in society during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In this Unit, we will carry forward this understanding to study the linkages between the general historical developments of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century and the kind of art, literature,

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music and the society that prevailed during this period. When you read this Unit, you will also see that when we talk of the prevailing dominant trends in art and culture, these mostly pertained to the trends in elite culture, which has been the focus of art history and the study of culture in general. We will take care to point out the limitations of its prevalence and also have something to say about what was happening in the field of popular culture.

By the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was also a wide divergence between social and political developments in western and Eastern Europe, and features of Central Europe too were not the same in, for example, Austria and Hungary and Turkey. These had some bearing on the art, culture and society in these regions. England and the Continent too were not identical in the kind of literature and art produced, although there were some commonalities, and we will refer to some of these common aspects and differences.

Although the study of continents other than Europe is outside the scope of this Unit, we will at least point out to you that other parts of the world were not bereft of art, culture and societal changes. There has been a tendency in historiography to view the West as pointing the way towards advance of humankind, with other continents trailing behind; not just in economy but all elements of civilization. Although the idea of the West 'civilizing' the countries they conquered has now been discredited, there is still a bias in considering the West as leading the way – in the forms of cultural expression that we are going to talk about here. We will try to disabuse you of some of these stereotypes and prejudices.

Moreover, changes in society and culture do not occur overnight. Some of the trends that were introduced and flourished during the Renaissance continued into the seventeenth century, while many new aspects that became the hallmark of the culture in the era of the French and Industrial Revolutions of late eighteenth century can be traced to artistic expressions during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

In other words, culture and social expressions during this period were as complex and varied as real life was. The period covered forms a transition between the Renaissance and the Modern world created by the French and Industrial Revolutions, but is also significant in its own right. We have read something about this in our Units on the English Revolution and the Scientific Revolutions of the seventeenth century: you would note that they have been termed revolutions despite the continuities they represented or restored.

Since there are separate Units dealing with intellectual and political thought and with the Scientific Revolution and also the demographic changes and family and class relations, here we would speak only of the formal aspects of cultural expression: the arts, literature, music and architecture. Among these too we would be selective, discussing trends and mentioning only some important names and works to underline these trends. We will focus on one or two art forms in one or another region to illustrate our arguments rather than all aspects of cultural production in each country, the purpose being to familiarize you with the broad significant trends.

5.2 THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND CONDITIONS OF DIVERSITY

The developments in art and culture during the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century derived from the cultural arts forms of the Renaissance in Europe and from the social and political changes of the period we are looking at. In England, the turbulence and contestations of the English Revolution and the Civil War ended with the Restoration, which, as we saw restored some things and replaced or changed others: a new stable 'order' was created, with Parliament as the major location of power and an ascendant new gentry and bourgeoisie at the helm of affairs. The literature of the period can be seen to reflect this, with Shakespeare, for example, straddling like a colossus across this marker and reflecting the shifts in English drama and poetry, along with many others. The decline in Crown patronage, the growth of private enterprise and the Reformation, irrevocably changed the conditions of cultural production.

In France, the triumph of Absolutism and the Court culture under Louis XIV and XV and its mercantilist policies were decisive conditions under which artists worked and survived. France, particularly Paris and Versailles, became in many ways the cultural capital of Europe, and its cultural influence was felt across Europe, among the artists and intellectuals and also in the Courts of other rulers.

The decline of Spain and Italian states after the sixteenth century, and shift of economic activity from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic affected patronage of literature and art in these countries in a major way. Italy, for example, no longer remained as lively as it did during the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, and the different states of Venice and Rome show different cultural influences, based on the political and economic of the seventeenth century in these States.

The prosperity of the Dutch trade, growth of textile production and the flow of wealth into Holland, and migrations of the persecuted Huguenots from France, were major factors in the emergence of the Dutch school of painting, considered the most significant in Europe during the seventeenth century.

The area we know as Germany today had not yet become a nation state. It remained divided into small states ruled by princes, was far from the seaports, and the middle classes, even as they began to develop in this period were small petty bureaucrats in the service of princes or shopkeepers, school teachers. Aristocratic culture was, therefore, still dominant, and the influence of French Court and French universities was prevalent among the higher landed aristocracy, based on land or officialdom. The earlier impulse of the German Renaissance, very significant in the German states during the sixteenth century, was lost through the Thirty Years War and its consequences, which involved almost every European country in the region.

The Austrian Empire was multinational, serfdom had still not been abolished in Central Europe and in the entire region the culture continued to be aristocratic, with huge gaps between the elite and popular culture. In the Russian Empire, such "Westernization" as was encouraged was in the fields of science and technology rather than ideas. Serfdom was the basic feature of the social structure and the Tsar had more absolute powers than anywhere in Europe. Turkey was another such region. In short the economic and political changes that came with

the decline of feudalism of feudalism and the entire Renaissance had still to be experienced or its impact felt in these societies. Therefore, the changes in culture that emerging capitalism and bourgeois middle class development saw in Western Europe did not extend to Central and Eastern Europe, where culture remained far more elitist, confined mostly to the aristocracy, influenced and educated in the cultural centres of Western Europe. Germany too became an influence here, but that was only from the nineteenth century. The cultural resources of Central and Eastern Europe were therefore partly indigenous and autonomous, and partly received from Western Europe. But in the period we are looking at, the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century, before the French and the Industrial Revolution, the influence of Western Europe was minimal, even among the high landed aristocracy.

Given all this, there was huge divergence between the culture and thinking of the ruling classes or the educated, and the predominantly rural popular culture. The gap was least in England and most perhaps in parts of the Russian Empire. There are also new developments in styles and content of cultural production from the beginning of the period under discussion until the decade before the French Revolution, which we will mark as we go along: just as it was in politics and in society in general. Court societies remained, yet the new social classes like the bourgeoisie made their presence felt, in art and culture as much as in politics.

5.3 COURT SOCIETY AND THE BOURGEOISIE: ASPECTS OF CULTURE

European court society had always been geographically and socially multi-centred, but from the mid seventeenth century the cultural dominance of the French Court at Versailles was obvious: fashions, the French language and painting and architectural styles began to be imitated or adapted in all courts across Europe. It was a life style that shed many of the patterns of cultural expressions of the traditional nobility and in the process adopted many new elements that came as a result to trade and commerce and knowledge of other regions of the world, as well as of the wealthy bourgeoisie. Although it was the bourgeoisie that aimed at adopting the life styles of the aristocracy, but in the process the cultural ambience and aspirations of the entire privileged sections underwent a change. The late seventeenth and the eighteenth century were crucial in this transformation of elite culture: family heritage and title, wealth and patronage constituted its building blocks. Court manners and etiquette, wigs and their styles for men, wire supported dresses for women to give these a flare, private salons of patronage became models.

But the 18th century was an age of secularization of arts in a much deeper sense than the 17th century, when art broke away from the realms of the Church and the Court to clearly secular moorings and a modern cultural space in many of the cities of Europe. The flourishing Universities and expansion of education, outside the dominance of the Church, was an important factor. It was an age of great social churning. Rude points out that although the "eighteenth century was not a 'golden age' of the arts or an age of literary giants like the century before", yet "it was an age of extraordinarily fertile artistic and literary activity of which the second half is perhaps more remarkable than the first" (*Rude*, p. 139). The late seventeenth century had the dominant cultural influence of the Versailles Court,

while the eighteenth century brought the bourgeois world into greater focus. By the end of the 18th century the general populace began to have presence in the art and literature of the period. Popular culture felt the influences of the time, as communication channels opened through market, trade and commerce, and growth of towns.

5.4 VISUAL ARTS: ARCHITECTURE, PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

Louis XIV set the scale for art patronage and purpose, and therefore, size. All the arts were used "for the purpose of glorifying the French monarchy". The capital was built at Versailles, with a grand palace and from 1664 onwards festivals of music, drama and ballet were organized there. The palace architecture itself set a style, as did painting, especially portraiture, which other courts imitated. This overarching influence began to have other inspirations towards the mid eighteenth century. Both art and music were sponsored and patronized largely by courts and by the Church. Towards the 18th century the ideas of the *philosphes* began to permeate the world of culture. Freedom for artists, as for ideas, began to be championed by some and there developed a culture of art and literary criticism that helped shape public tastes in the arts and letters. There was a trend towards secularization of culture, even as the Church continued to be a major patron.

5.4.1 Artistic Styles

There were many artistic styles during this long period, from mid-17th to the mid-18th century, that got reflected in the various visual arts: Mannerism, Baroque-Classical, Rococo and Romanticism. They are reflected somewhat in literary styles too.

As Arnold Hauser tells us, "**Mannerism** is the artistic expression of the crisis which convulses the whole of Western Europe in the sixteenth century". After the invasions of Italy, and whose effects continue to be felt till the 17th century, the Renaissance art was transformed and many of the Renaissance artists themselves reflected this crisis and change in art forms towards the end of their work life: for example, the later works of Michelangelo and Rafael. Renaissance art had been characterized by a sense of proportion and space: mannerism, derived from the word style in Italian, reflected an exaggeration and distortion of these elements, sometimes in a sophisticated way as to produce beautiful works, especially by the masters. But nevertheless, proportion as adherence to natural surroundings (a characteristic of Renaissance art and architecture) was disturbed.

What followed, particularly under the patronage of 17th century courts, was the courtly **Baroque** style, characterized, by grandeur, scale, drama, vitality and movement and exaggerated emotional exuberance, reflected in all the arts of the time. The settings are extravagant; there is dramatic use of colour, and high contrasts of light and shadow, light and darkness. There is also a tendency to blur the distinctions between different art forms and to create harmony in the arts and music after the end of religious and social discord and wars of mid sixteenth to mid seventeenth century. The inspiration for baroque art was the influence of the Roman Catholic Church and its patronage in order to combat Protestantism, and the Spanish and French kingdoms also Roman Catholic states.

The **Rococo** style that developed out of the baroque, further elaborated on the design elements, particularly emphasis on excessive decorativeness and ornamentation of the interiors, use of pastel colours, and a return to asymmetrical patterns. It mainly differed from the baroque in being "light, airy and decorative", reflected a degree of secularization in the arts and preferred smaller scales than the grandeur of baroque.

Romanticism was characterized by its emphasis on return of naturalism in the arts, and is a development of the 18th century. It marks the beginnings of industrialization and urbanism, emphasis on reason and science and the new social contradictions, which evoked in certain sections of the intellectuals of the period a nostalgia or love for what had been lost and an advocacy for emotion and passion as drivers of human endeavour.

5.4.2 Architecture

The baroque first appeared in Rome during last quarter of the 16th century, from where it spread to Germany, Sweden, Poland, Spain, Portugal and Latin America under Spanish domination. The idea behind it was harmony and reconciliation of conflicts and therefore grand presentation to the people of the power that engulfed the populace. It became immensely popular and evoked wonder and awe. Its buildings consisted of churches, palaces, squares and fountains, all of which are central to courtly culture. There were also ornate opera houses constructed all over Europe.

Absolutism gave further impetus to monumentalism in architecture and in the arts. The capitals were designed to reflect monarchical authority, symbolizing power of the State, and on which royal armies could parade and on which stood government buildings and royal residences, and barracks for the royal armies.

In terms of style, the baroque was combined with a restrained classicism, signifying sophistication along with grandeur. Royal Academies of Art were established, following that in France, that influenced and commanded the classical rulers that sculptors and painters were to be guided by. Le Brun, an artist of the time, was made in charge and soon instructions were given regarding what was to be taught in the academies and the styles that must be encouraged. The Germans and Austrians added their own original features. St. Petersburg was a blend of Italian classicism and Russian decorative motifs.

In this combination of baroque and classicism, the "sculptor-artists conceived of their buildings as 'total' works of art in which sculpted figures and elaborate wall and ceiling paintings were not so much decorations as integral parts of a highly complex artistic concept". The Church of St. Charles Borromeo in Vienna, built by architect JB Fischer von Erlach (1656-1723) in the first half of the 18th century is a prime example. The architects and painters collaborated with each other in such buildings. Many architects were sculptors too. Bernini was a significant name in architecture.

The rococo style too originated in France, during the reign of Louis XV and spread to the German and Italian states, particularly in the rebuilding of the German monasteries, abbeys and churches. The richness of design in these was in keeping with the rococo and became widespread as a church building style across Europe. England was an exception, where the country houses were modeled

on the building styles of Venice rather than Rome or France, being far more modest. Their town squares were likewise not so large and grand.

5.4.3 Painting

In painting and sculpture too, the artists during the course of the 17th century were largely dependent on Court, nobility and the Church. Absolutism in painting is most starkly reflected in paintings depicting the figures of monarchs in glory, again following the pattern set by Louis XIV in France. Much of the painting in the baroque buildings was done as decorations on walls and ceilings of palaces and churches. The 18th century changed the scope and types of use of painting. The artist became known through his canvas, not as part of the architectural scenario.

Towards the early 18th century, Greek and religious themes began to be combined with and then gave way to new motifs deriving from everyday life and portraits of the nobility and other wealthy persons. Life styles of court society and nobility, as different from a focus on the grandeur of monarchs became new subject matters of painting. The visual arts became more social in character, even as individuals and portraits began to be painted or sketched, and also smaller in size. Dresses, cultural artefacts and settings depicted today tell us a great deal of the 18th century society. The paintings were now installed in galleries or on walls of houses, and were done with more freedom in terms of colour and individual choice of the artist rather than conventional patterns. Portraits were popular, and almost all the significant artists did portraits. The subject matter of paintings was quite varied. In styles, the artists wavered between tradition and freedom. Reproductions became popular and many artists were involved in doing them.

The first public art exhibition was organized in Paris in 1737. The French painter Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684-1721) was the first to reflect this trend in his works, not only as regards the subject matter but also the decorative and small scale representative of the rococo style. Francois Boucher made some erotic paintings, Honore Fragonard did portraits and pastoral scenes, J.B. Greuze was influenced by Dutch painters and depicted domestic life, Joseph Vernet did seascapes and harbors and scenes of nature. David (1748-1825), a significant painter represented republican values and self-sacrifice. Hogarth (1697-1764) in England portrayed the everyday life in England, also adding humour and satire in his depictions. Goya was an important painter in Spain, also displaying conflicts and social life with some satire. The Venetian artists were wonderful with colour and shade and give us a good picture of the lagoons of Venice. In the German states, after an initial period, the artists were influenced by the romantic wave. In Russia there was influence mainly of the French styles, combined with depictions of Russian landscapes and peasant life. In general, the artists wavered between tradition and freedom.

In Netherlands (Holland), the trajectory was somewhat different. Dutch prosperity of the seventeenth century, deriving from its trade and commerce, saw the emergence of a 'Dutch School of painting' that reflected the lifestyles and tastes of the Dutch middle classes. There emerged a market in art dominated by the port of Amsterdam and its wealthy merchants. The painters depicted urban and rural landscapes, and everyday Dutch life, human emotions and domestic scenes within homes, and excelled in the blend of light, shadow and colour. Portraits and still life were also significant. The important Dutch painter was Rembrandt

(1606-69), who in addition to these also painted religious and mythological subjects. He was son of a miller and grandson of a baker, and became famous only posthumously. He also did several self-portraits.

5.5 MUSIC

Throughout the 17th century the opera was the predominant form of music and Italian musicians were the most celebrated in Europe. The first public opera house was also built in the Italian city of Venice, and thereafter flourished in all capital cities. Claudio Monterverdi (1567-1643) was the greatest composer of this century. The opera, because it verbalized music, was akin to poetry and drama and directly appealed to emotions and therefore had audiences from both the elite and common people, with separate seating arrangements. It was extremely popular in Italy with huge audiences, but apart from a few other countries it remained an entertainment attended only by the elite. It coincided with the baroque style of art and music and continued well into the 18th century.

However, towards the 18th century, "the taste for music also moved beyond the constraints of court, ecclesiastical, and noble patronage." (*Merriman,* p. 356). Operas were the main forms in the 17th century, and were performed in the opera houses constructed by the monarchs around their palaces or the churches. A second form was chamber music performed in the salons of the wealthy, and had small number of performers. It was music for intimate private listening, patronized by the wealthy. To begin with all composers were Court composers. The music compositions were called quartets and concertos. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), a German composer and musician of the Baroque period, was a towering figure remembered for his Brandenburg Concertos and the Goldberg Variations, and also his vocal music. Antonio Lucio *Vivaldi,* the Italian Baroque musical composer, was best known for his 'The Four Seasons' and his sonatas and concertos for the violin.

The 18th century in general was a century of giants: Bach, Handel, Mozart, Hayden and Gluck. In the first half of the century there were two main forms, the Opera continuing from the seventeenth century, and religious music that consisted of cantatas and oratorios. New musical instruments too were evolved and became widespread: the piano from the harpsichord in 1711, the flute in 1750 and then the clarinet. Small concertos continued to be played, but increasingly there were larger professional orchestras with symphonies and more instruments, and concerts attended by larger audiences from the upper and middle classes. Music came out of the chambers to music halls. These changes occurred during the lifetime of the above-mentioned composers, whose work was quite varied through their musical careers: they all composed operas, quartets, concertos and symphonies for big orchestras.

Check Your Progress 1

1) How the changes in art were related to socio-economic conditions in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries?

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2) Describe the main artistic styles that emerged between mid-seventeenth and mid-eighteenth century.

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5.6 LITERATURE

An audience for literature grew with the growth and expansion of literacy and printing presses across Europe. While written literature remained confined to the literate, drama performances of plays transcended these barriers, and within written literature there was considerable variety to suit the varied tastes and intellectual and societal gradations. Existing forms of literature were transformed in both style and content in the second half of the 17th and 18th century, as society and cultural tastes evolved in keeping with the expansion of Europe and the enlightenment ideas and the scientific revolution, which had important historical consequences even for those not directly connected with them. The sheer availability of the printed material and translations on a larger scale had revolutionary consequences, whose impact could be experienced in the world during and after the French revolution. Most major writers straddled more than one form of writing. And common features were found across Europe, with specific national context and distinctions. There were several variants of pastoral poetry and novels of chivalry, depictions of the conflict between town and country, a feeling of discomfort expressed through literature.

England produced an outburst of writing that reflected the changed spirit. Shakespeare continued to be performed and was looked at differently; his later plays were already reflecting the changed climate of the 17th century. John Milton, John Bunyan and John Dryden were the big names of the 17th century baroque literature of grandeur. John Bunyan's *The Pilgrims Progress*, a religious allegory, published in two parts in 1678 and 1684, is a "symbolic vision of the good man's pilgrimage through life". At one time it was second only to the Bible in popularity. Bunyan was imprisoned by the State for his views. In poetry, Milton's *On His Blindness* and *The Paradise Lost* were kind of modern epics that depicted the experience of those caught in the politics and religious wars of the 17th century. The ironies of the time are expressed in La Fontaine's (1621-95) *Fables* and in the devastating sketches of the public personalities in John Dryden's (1631-1700) work, followed by Alexander Pope whose poems *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), *The Rape of the Lock* (1712-14), *The Dunciad* (1728), and *An Essay on Man* (1733-34), made him a major voice in England.

As the 18th century progressed, there was much that thinking minds perceived as requiring questioning and critique, of both institutions and ways of thinking. This became reflected in an outburst of satire and in the novels written. Jonathan Swift's satirical novel *Gulliver's Travels* critiqued contemporary European prejudices in an emerging age of science and technology, as did Voltaire's *Candide*. Swift, of Anglo-Irish origin was satirist, essayist, political pamphleteer and poet.

Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) was another towering presence of many talents: poet, playwright, essayist, moralist, literary critic, biographer, editor, and lexicographer. Diaries became another popular literary form. Evelyn Jones and Samuel Pepys' diaries became famous. Edward Gibbon's *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* in several volumes was a landmark. The Scottish Enlightenment led to a flowering of literature.

France produced two contradictory yet related trends, reflected in the Enlightenment and Romanticism, which gave rise to a lot of political and philosophical writings that could be characterized as literature of ideas, and involved a variety of genres. The *Encyclopedia* of Diderot was the most celebrated of these, as were the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau. For example, *The Spirit of the Laws* by Montesquieu in 1748, *An Essay on Tolerance* by Voltaire in 1763, *The Social Contract* by Rousseau 1762; *The Supplement to a voyage of Bougainville* by Diderot, or The *History of the Two Indias* by the Abbé Guillaume-Thomas Raynal were important essays. Montesquieu also wrote a satire on French life in the form of letters, presumably from another country. The important works of the *philosophes* belonged to a variety of different genres, such as the tale illustrating a particular philosophical point; *Zadig* (1747) or *Candide* (1759), both by Voltaire in 1759; or essays. The comedies of Marivaux and of Beaumarchais also played a part in this debate about and diffusion of great ideas. History writing and journalism became important forms of cultural expression, identity formation and quest for knowledge all across Europe. Many of the philosophies wrote art criticism and on the philosophy of aesthetics and beauty.

The novel was a more flexible form in terms of the variety of experiences it could express and the social settings it could be placed in. It underwent transformations in content to reflect the more immediate circumstances and milieu, particularly with the expansion also of many women readers. Many women writers too emerged. There was emphasis on characters and personal relationships, an example being Madame Lafayyete's *The Duchess of Cleves* (1678). She was hostess of one of the famous Parisian salons of the time. There were also novels of adventures and fantasy, the most well-known among them being Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. There were others that reflected the great moral dilemmas and conflicts of the time, for example the works of Henry Fielding, Samuel Richardson, Laurence Stern, Tobias Smolding. The 18th century marks the age of realism and the birth of the modern novel, and there was a "deheroising and humanizing of heroes" (*Hauser,* p. 25), and a middle class morality and some realism.

The French novelists showed great versatility, although the influence of the English novel was there: there were the philosophical tales by people like Voltaire, a romantic sentimental one by Rousseau, novels of social realism and love by Marivoux, psychological explorations and imagined scenarios by various authors, and autobiographies which became models for discovering and exploring the self.

German literature was influenced by English and French works, but later developed its own stream of romanticism, with emphasis on feelings and emotional grandeur, referred to in literature as "Storm and Stress". The greatest names of 18th century German literature were Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Herder and Friedrich Schiller. Their works encompassed folk songs, poetry, dramas and literary criticism. In fact growth of art criticism

and literary criticism emerged as significant during this period across Europe. Translation was widespread, and readership of important works were read throughout Europe.

Westernisation by Peter the Great brought the Russian intelligentsia into regular contact with Western Europe and many of the works read in the 18th century were mainly translations. The first modern writing in Russian is said to be a novel by Radishchev, *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*, which is a vivid critique of Russian society and political system. A pioneering national poet and playwright was Lomonosov. In Hungary and Poland literature was tied to independence and self-expression as search for identity and nationality. In the Ottoman Empire literature, influences by Persian forms, was much more varied, with Sufi poetry and ghazals and stories linked with folk memories. Sweden and Denmark produced many works of drama and history and literary criticism.

The life of literature, in its relationship with society, was most directly reflected in **theatre**, both in the plays written and their performance. Here, the educated who wrote the plays and the many not so literate who formed the audience, came together to add a new dimension to literary production. Theatre was popular across Europe, despite the past censorship or restrictions imposed during the religious wars by the churches. In England there merged a trend in drama that is collectively known as "Restoration drama", that emerged after the post Renaissance productions of Shakespeare and overcoming the setbacks and censure on theatre during the Cromwellian regime. As in the case of the arts and architecture, in France during the 17th century, the French Court used theatre as part of enhancing its glories. The great writers of drama, Jean Baptiste Moliere (1622-73) and Jean Racine (1639-99) enjoyed court patronage, but also broke free to write for varied audiences. Of the two, Moliere plays were bolder, and contained social and religious satire, while Racine continued to rely on traditional classical themes to depict modern psychological sensibility, was more poetic, and accepted a Court position towards the end of his life. In the 18th century, with the liveliness in French politics and the life of the salons, theatre began to express the ideas of the time, breaking away from its moorings in court culture. We have referred to the comedies of Marivaux and of Beaumarchais which became significant expressions of the debates and ferment of ideas of the period. In Germany, Lessing was the most important name, writing both comedies and plays with social themes a new original sensibility. In Bohemia, the Czech national theatre was opened in 1737, Poland in 1765.

5.7 SOCIAL LIFE AND LEISURE

Social life was very much shaped by material conditions of the late 17th and 18th century. In general people had more household items in their homes with, however, only the real elite getting introduced to what we can call a consumer culture, with big houses and large spaces at their disposal. It is from them that resources for culture and leisure came from. The entertainment, the fashions of the time and celebrations of festivals of the elite pertain to these sections of society across Europe, the landed classes and the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the distinctions in culture and entertainment were along class lines rather than between town and countryside. Yet, there were differences between how the aristocracy clad themselves and the middle classes during these occasions, with velvets and jewellery signifying power as much as wealth.

Improvement in communications and transport, as well as travel and literacy and education brought about some convergence of elite culture by the end of the 18th century. Salons were the centres of cultural life in the 18th century and this marked a real break with the courtly culture. The cities were no longer subsidiaries or adjuncts of the Courts and the impulse for cultural expression in these salons came from the bourgeoisie, even if the aristocracy participated in them. They facilitated both convergence and debate of ideas. Hauser calls these salons "the cultural heirs of the Court", with the major gap now being between the common people and those who stood above.

Literacy and the expansion of the reading public had similar impact. In the French towns, by the middle of the 18th century, "up to 90 per cent of the lower middle class could read and write, and about 50 per cent of the better working class, with some 20 per cent of the poorest sections of society." For women the rates were much lower, but literacy was spreading. Other countries of western Europe can be more or less comparable, with literacy being more restricted to the upper echelons in eastern and central Europe in the 18th century. In protestant countries, the houses of clergymen were important centres of literacy still. Attitudes to children's education began to be positive. Given the variations in terms of class, gender, region and between town and country, in access to education, the generalization holds true regarding the impact of expanding literacy on culture and politics.

Newspapers and broadsheets began to proliferate throughout Europe. The English revolution had seen a mass upsurge in printed material, and "the first daily newspaper was published in London in 1702, and there were provincial ones too." There were private circulating libraries. The two decades before the French revolution saw a similar upsurge in France and across Europe. And then there were chapbooks, or illustrated and abridged editions of classic and well known novels that were read by mass of the reading public. Women constituted a big portion of this readership. The old classes like the landed aristocracy and the peasantry were becoming transformed during this period, while new classes like the bourgeoisie and the urban working classes emerged to create modern society.

5.8 POPULAR CULTURE

The popular culture of the 17th and the 18th century was in one sense far removed from that of the privileged world of the elite and the educated. A large component of it was peasant culture, its songs, stories and folk lore centred around the world of the peasant and his/her agricultural cycle. As Rude points out, "some of this was traditional and by no means peculiar to the eighteenth century, like the folksongs and folklore, which had deep roots in the past and were carried by word of mouth and only appeared as literature when recorded by professionals" and the educated.

While the rootedness in peasant life and its continuity through centuries made peasant popular culture diverse and regional and to a degree autonomous, the very fact of its transmission in time added elements that were contemporary to the times it was continuously manifested in. Changes occurred simply because life changed and minds and knowledge changed. Further, connectedness of the modern world in the 16th and 17th centuries broke its autonomy, if not the diversity. Between 1500 and 1800 the popular traditions were subject to change

in all sorts of ways, as a result of social stratification and also participation of the elite in popular festivals, for example the carnivals, feasts of saints and May Day celebrations in their areas, and on the other hand the access of craftspeople and peasants to printed books, for example ballads committed to writing by the scholars or other educated elite. And, as Burke again points out, clowns were popular at courts as well as taverns, often the same clowns. (*Burke*, pp. 24-25) The arias of the Italian opera were sung by Neapolitan boatmen and venetian gondoliers, and Parisian people in the streets. (*Rude,* p.151)

The various contradictory elements in combination meant that "there were varieties of popular culture" and by 1800, "craftsmen and peasants usually had a regional rather than a national consciousness", or a cosmopolitan one like the elite. This is because while "the elite participated in the little tradition, but the common people did not participate in the great tradition" (of the elite). They still retained a common world linked with their social situation. The city and the urban poor and working people added a new dimension to popular culture. There were harvest festivals of course, but also spinning songs, weavers' songs, sailors' songs, women's songs and so on, and traditions that members of different guilds followed. Tastes, artefacts, ways of building houses, articles of consumption, household items etc., all underwent some change with urbanization, change in working patterns of production and the commercial revolution, including production for a market. Peasants were also influenced by the baroque and rococo forms which they adapted to their own styles and subject matters in their paintings.

Literacy and reading was an important factor in ways time was spent, and horse racing, discussions in taverns and the village square were new elements of time pass and entertainment. Hundreds of written materials were brought out especially for popular consumption. The content of the chapbooks above mentioned points to changing preferences for reading. Politics after the English revolution and on the Continent in the two decades before the French Revolution led to politicization of culture and political consciousness and participation in meetings.

While all this brought a convergence in culture, the scientific revolution and enlightenment thought, pervasive among the educated elite, all increased the gap in many ways between elite and popular culture and ways of thinking. The culture of the taverns of the common people was distinct from that of the salons of the 18th century, even when politics pervaded them.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Describe the main features of growth of literature in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries in Europe with examples.

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2) Write a brief note on Popular Culture during this period.

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5.9 LET US SUM UP

We have seen in this Unit that the late 17th and 18th century till the Industrial and the French revolutions was significant in its own right and the developments in culture and society cannot simply be passed through simply as a bridge between the great Renaissance and the modern world ushered in by the two revolutions. The cultural ambience and cultural production of this period, including lifestyles and everyday patterns of living, were shaped by the changes in material conditions, particularly production for market and the commercial revolution. The social classes were taking the shape of what we see in our modern societies. The scientific revolution and the spread of enlightenment thought was significant in the evolution of new ways of thinking and looking at their own societies.

There was diversity and distinction not only over this long chronological period, but also between the different regions of Europe during the same years. There were points of convergence and conflict between elite culture and popular culture. The cultural developments of this period laid the foundations for the two revolutions that shaped the world we live in and the way we experience modernity, the human advances and the increase in inequalities that are around us.

5.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) See Section 5.2

2) See Sub-section 5.4.1

Check Your Progress 2

1) See Section 5.6

2) See Section 5.8

UNIT 6 THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION*

Structure

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should

- be familiar with the main events or timeline of the English Revolution;
- be able to link its events with the general developments during the 17th century;
- be able to establish some linkages between its political, economic and social aspects;
- discern the different themes and trends that constituted the English revolution;
- have some idea of the historiography and debates about it;
- be able to explain the distinction between what has been called the English Revolution and the Glorious Revolution;
- be able to discuss the nomenclature of Civil War to describe its main conflicts, and what is meant by the term in the context of the English Revolution, and
- be able to understand the significance of the English Revolution and its place in modern European history.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The English Revolution is among the most important developments of the 17th century and had far reaching consequences. It can be understood well only in the context of the social, economic and intellectual developments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and its specific events also have their roots in the crisis of the 17th century. Here we will focus on the main events and trends of the English Revolution, including their social and economic dimensions. Economic interests and social aspirations were often linked with the political conflicts and

* Resource Person : Dr. Nalini Taneja

arguments put forward by the main political actors in the events. The political dimension of the Revolution took primarily the form of a struggle for power between the King and the Parliament.

The English revolution could not have taken place without the decline of the feudal system, the backdrop of the explorations of the 16th century and the discovery of 'new' lands, the interactions with other societies, the questioning of the Church and the Reformation, and the contributions of geographers, and philosopher-scientists like Leonardo da Vinci, Copernicus and Galileo about the human body and the Universe, not to speak of the whole experience of the Renaissance and Humanism, and the political thought linked with it. We will, therefore, briefly consider these aspects also.

6.2 AN OVERVIEW

The period between 1642 and 1660, characterized by armed conflict and political turmoil in England, is known variously as the English Revolution or the Civil War, depending on the features that are emphasized by different historians to describe this turmoil and conflict. The events included a series of engagements between the King i.e., the Crown and Parliament, during which the high points were the trial and execution of King Charles I, the establishment of what came to be known as the Commonwealth of England for a few years (1649-1653), and the rise of Oliver Cromwell who became almost a dictator representing specific social interests. It is said to have ended with the restoration of the Monarchy, which also is variously known as Restoration or the Glorious Revolution, depending on the features emphasized by different historians.

This period was also important for the expression within the political mainstream, and outside it, of certain ideas that became the hallmark of thinking in a modern society: liberty, equality and the modernity that we encounter in the later revolutions were articulated here in England for the first time in attempts to reform the political structure in the larger context of the nation-state.

The English Revolution began as a conflict between the King and Parliament, regarding where the real political authority lay. The origins of the parliament lay in a Council created by Henry I during the 11th century, but it came to be known as parliament only in the 13th century, and was dominated by the higher nobility and high church functionaries. In 1215, the parliament won for itself a charter of demands safeguarding the interests of these classes, known as the *Magna Carta*, which set the precedent for the conflict whereby the ruling classes of England asserted their rights and privileges from the existing national monarchy. As England underwent social and economic changes, the merchants and the emerging middle classes began to lay their claims. During the Tudor regime, the merchants interested in the explorations and the consequent trade with colonies encouraged by the King, found it in their interest to support the King. By the time of the Stuarts in the 17th century, these developments contributed to land becoming integral to the exchange economy, the growth of market in land and in the products of the land. Even those not traditionally based in land wanted to buy land. The confiscation and sale of church lands had also contributed to the land market.

With land becoming an important factor in the emerging capitalism, there was a change in the composition of those aspiring to hold land and an expansion of the

land market. The ruling classes linked with land also expanded as a consequence, and began to hold broader interests than the landed classes earlier. These new landed gentry added new dimensions to the conflict between King and Parliament, which took the form of religious conflict and Civil War. Variously, these dimensions involved taxation, foreign policy and wars, property rights and religious rights, and above all, a questioning of the theory of 'Divine Right of Kings'.

Religion also became a dividing factor. For reasons that we will explore, most of the Catholics, and many conservative Protestants, continued to support the Crown, while those who came to be called Puritans sided with the Parliament. Thus the political conflict assumed a religious dimension, or as some would say, the religious divide resulted in political opposition.

The stakes of the Monarchy in areas of Scotland and Ireland meant that the conflict raged not only within England proper, but also in all the areas ruled by and in which the Stuart monarchy claimed stakes, Scotland and Ireland included.

6.3 THE MAIN ISSUES OF THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION

We will now go on to the main issues that emerged in this multi-dimensional conflict within English society and in British politics. How and why did these issues of conflict arise, and when they did?

The Tudor monarchy had achieved a kind of equilibrium of social forces that also became represented in the political system. Therefore, the birth of the nation-state in England was synonymous with the rise of absolutism that had a degree of consent or sanction by the major sections of the nobility who constituted the ruling classes. The nation state was only just beginning to acquire a centralized standing army and bureaucracy and the powers of the feudal nobility had been curbed. On the social and economic front, the decline of the feudal nobility resulted in the growth and expansion of a new class of landed gentry that had a stake in both land ownership and market in agricultural production, the two being part of the same process that stood between decline of feudal economy and the emergence of capitalism. A monarchy that supported the voyages of discovery and long distance commerce had the support of both the merchants and the new landed gentry because it undermined the power of the old feudal nobility. Merchants too began to invest in land. These classes needed the new monarchy as much as the monarchy needed their support. In subduing the feudal potentates the Monarchy made the social terrain safe for commercial interests and landed property against brigandage and the arbitrariness of feudal law that privileged hierarchy at every level of society.

This changed by the beginning of the seventeenth century as these new social and economic forces became wealthier, stronger and more independent and now wanted more autonomy and say in political matters. The acquisition of private property through sale required laws that cemented the right to private property, which could not be encroached upon by feudal privilege or by the Crown. They wanted more changes in their favour than the successive kings were prepared to concede: the monarchy now seemed an obstacle rather than a promoter of their further advancement. This conflict was inherent in the very logic of development

of social and economic forces in the seventeenth century, though it may not have been quite apparent to them as they fought the power of the king on various issues that seemed to confront them.

Confronting these issues resulted, ultimately, in what can be called the reform or new adjustments or creation of a constitutional monarchy – a system unique to England, and different from the Continent, in the working of its political institutions, if not in the content of the social classes it empowered and represented.

In France, the real challenge to the feudal landed aristocracy came only with the French Revolution in the eighteenth century, as an absolutist monarchy presiding over trade and commerce, the growth of middle classes, the first enclosures of land and emergence of capitalistic features, continued to hold power and protect the interests of the feudal landed aristocracy.

So, while the kings in England might have wanted to enjoy the power of their counterparts on the Continent, the development of English society and economy favoured changes that enabled a curbing of their powers: you would learn later that the first industrial revolution occurred in Britain rather than on the Continent, and is not unrelated to these developments that allowed a growth of what are now called the "pre-requisites of the industrial revolution".

The Parliament became the vehicle or instrument of these changes in the realm of politics, while the Monarchy now relied on those entrenched within the political system in the sixteenth century, the feudal barons that it had brought under control, who had lost their economic dominance and were now dependent on Court positions and therefore willing to safeguard their pre-eminence in the political system by supporting the Monarchy. They were opposed to the erosion of the entire complex of power that formed this pact. On the other hand, the commercial interests now required the whole national market, the destruction of guilds that restricted non agricultural activity within specific towns, as did the landed gentry that had built its stakes in woolen textile production and pastoral farming, for which there was a growing market. The clash of interests with the yeomen and tenantry on land was still in the future, as was the contradiction between those involved in non agricultural production, the nascent capitalists and the nascent workmen who already depended on work on the orders from those in touch with the market and could provide them the raw materials. The separation between town and country had emerged, as had the division of labour, but not sufficient for the down trodden to challenge the new emerging dominant classes.

The English Revolution, therefore, occurred during the rule of the Stuarts in the mid seventeenth century, and was a product of the transformation in the structure of English rural society: the pacts and contradictions specific to this fluid but critical juncture in English social and political development.

The Revolution also presented itself as a Civil War and has been referred to as such by some contemporaries and later historians: this is due to the bitterness of the struggle obviously and because it seemed to tear the existing social fabric apart. It was the first major churning that challenged the existing political and social order throughout the nation-state. Because, unlike Europe, England never again experienced a revolution, say a 1789, 1830 or 1848, later historians have stressed on the continuities, the capacity for absorption of dissent, the willingness of accommodation within its institutions and the initiative for reforms that made

it unique and somewhat immune to the revolutionary tendencies of the 19th and 20th century Europe. Some historians have, in fact, questioned whether even the English was a revolution at all.

The English revolution was, on the other hand, followed by a Restoration, also called the Glorious Revolution, which has rendered the question of this nomenclature complex for England, particularly as both King and Parliament continued to play a significant role in British history right into and through the twentieth century, and the struggle/conflict between the Monarchy and the Parliament continued in various forms, representing adjustments within ruling classes and involving shifts of balance of power within institutions, as well as preservation of power of the ruling classes.

6.4 CONFLICT BETWEEN KING AND PARLIAMENT, TILL 1649

The English Revolution is said to have been provoked by Charles I when, in August 1642, he decided to raise an army for dealing with rebellion in Scotland, without putting this measure through the Parliament. Many members of the Parliament saw this as usurping the prerogatives hard won by "British society" in their struggle against absolutist rule of the King.

The seeds of the conflict between the Monarchy and the Parliament had, however, been sown earlier during the reign of James I (1603-1625), as the co-operation that the Tudors had managed to obtain from the Parliament began to be systematically eroded. To begin with, he was a strong advocate of the Divine Right of kings, and sought to rule accordingly, besides being of Scottish origin. Differences on the major issues of rights of Parliament, of different religious groups, and over matters of taxation and foreign policy had already emerged strong during his reign, and resulted in a considerable debt for the monarchy and a growing political crisis within the English political system. The monarchy felt constrained to order taxes in order to meet the growing costs of administration, army and needs of foreign policy, without obtaining sanction of Parliament, which was adamant in not giving these sanctions. The conflict came to a head over this.

During his reign Charles I (1625-1649), who succeeded James I, called the session of Parliament three times in four years, but dissolved it each time when matters came to a head over matter of finances. In 1628, he was forced to accept the *Petition of Right*, whereby he had to agree that in future he would not impose "loans" or taxes without parliamentary consent, and would not attempt to punish anyone who refused such loans. There was also condemnation of arbitrary arrest, martial law and other such aggressive measures by the King. Charles responded by dismissing the Parliament in 1629. For eleven years he ruled thereafter in a high-handed fashion, without calling the Parliament, until the fateful year 1640, when he was compelled to do so in order to pay for the war necessary to defeat the Scots. The Parliament hardly managed to complete two months and ended in deadlock once again.

This was also the turning point in his reign and in the constitutional history of England, for the Parliament demanded substantial concessions in terms of regulating the prerogatives of the Crown and the powers of the Parliament: it was now a tussle over how England was to be governed. Henceforth the Parliament

insisted on the reversal to the rights granted to the Council under the *Magna Carta* in 1415, that had been extracted by the barons who constituted the highest nobility and exercised great power. It insisted on final authority in all matters of finances, taxation and foreign policy decisions. They asked for religious reform. The tussle spilled over into matters of governance, with the Parliament calling for greater say and authority of local structures and officials at county level against the royal courts established by the Crown and dominated by the nobility representing royal interests and loyal to the King. The king was forced to call the Parliament again in 1640, known in history as the Long Parliament. Its members insisted on a redefinition of the powers of King and Parliament, with Parliament as supreme authority. It decided to abolish all the Courts and institutions that ensured royal authority: the Court of Star Chamber, the Court of High Commission, Council of the North and the Council of Wales. It decided to punish with imprisonment the significant officials responsible for asserting the power of the Crown and seen as undermining the legitimate rights of Parliament, among them William Laud and Wentworth. William Laud had been made the Primate of England in 1633 and was seen as exercising undue power on behalf of the King. It abolished knighthood and payment of what was known as ship money, and decreed the approval of Parliament necessary for all other taxes. By the *Triennial Act*, it sought to ensure that Parliament would have to be called at least once every three years.

In the meantime, the Irish revolt broken out in 1641, with the Irish rebels being seen as forces on the side of the King. Soon this had repercussions in the Parliament and resulted in the formation of a King's Party in Parliament. On its part, the Parliament produced a document called *The Grand Remonstrance* authored by Pym, leader of Parliament that tilted the balance of power firmly on the side of the Parliament, which was not acceptable to Charles I. It could be passed only by a majority of eleven votes, testifying to the deep cleavage in English society and politics.

At this critical juncture, on January 4, 1642, the King decided to respond with an attack on Parliament with his own armed force of 400 soldiers, hoping to arrest the main leaders of the opposition in Parliament. Now started the armed conflicts that have given to the English Revolution the nomenclature also of Civil War which ended in 1649, with the execution of Charles I and formation of a Republic headed by Oliver Cromwell. It meant victory for the Parliament.

Those who supported and fought on the side of the King, the Royalists, came to be called Cavaliers as they represented the old tradition of feudal fighting forces. Those on the side of the Parliament were called Roundheads because of the kind of caps they wore. The Cavaliers claimed to be fighting for not just King but God and against the disturbers of social harmony, the ones who sought to make "subjects princes and princes slaves". The allegiances were, however, complex: what was involved was not just issues of class, although they were paramount. As pointed out earlier, religion and foreign policy and the nature of rebellions, which brought Scotland and Ireland into the picture, also determined these allegiances. And life was disrupted in much larger areas than the sites of armed combat, because of requisitions, plunder and hardship due to strife.

Within the Parliamentary opposition forces too there were groupings and distinctions regarding methods of opposition to King and how far they may go in initiating change. Mainly there were two, the Presbyterians and Independents,

both Puritans in religious affiliation, the former among them more moderate and the latter insisting on more radical outcomes. Oliver Cromwell, an Independent, formed a Model Army to fight the battle against the Crown, in the process also changing the character of the militia by purging it of the moderate elements. This new Model Army was the force that finally defeated the King's forces in June 1645 when the Scots, on whom Charles was hoping to rely, left him to his devices to face this army owing allegiance to the Parliament. 1644-45 were the years of the biggest battles of the Civil War.

At this stage a "Rump Parliament" of members loyal to Cromwell was convened and decided on the King's execution and a Republic to replace the Monarchy, but not before many of the Independents themselves, considered too radical, were disbanded by a majority in the Parliament. The radical influence was that of the Levellers and Diggers, whom we will talk about subsequently, after we have outlined those who led the Republic. The "Rump Parliament" was so called because it was a continuation of the Long Parliament that had been in session before the Civil war and was never officially disbanded by the Parliament, which had assumed the right of dissolving the parliament, as opposed to its being the King's prerogative. Now, with the differences mentioned above within the Parliament, only 150 members called for the session passed the fateful decision of execution and Republic. The execution took place on January 30, 1649.

Throughout this period the English Parliament continued to consist of two houses, the House of Lords and House of Commons, both dominated by the representatives of the landed gentry, although the Upper House was predominantly of titled nobility and the Commons had members of those who had expanded the ranks of the gentry due to acquisition of land during the late 16th and early 17th century, and merchants with high stake in both commerce and land. These were the ones demanding restrictions on Absolutism and prerogatives of the Monarchy. They had support of those called the "middle sort of people" and yeoman and artisans, some of whom exhibited radical tendencies. It was also a period of intense activity and experimentation, including attempts at constitutionalism.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Discuss the nature of conflict between different social groups during the English Revolution.

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2) Briefly describe the nature of conflict betweern the King and the Parliament in England till 1649.

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6.5 OLIVER CROMWELL AND THE REPUBLIC, 1649-53

For all practical purposes, the Civil War did not end with the formation of the Commonwealth. Cromwell had to deal with all the continuing issues that preceded him, and although the King had been removed, it cannot be said that the Royalist challenge was over, as events were to show. His personality, of course towered over the period, as much as did that of the King in the earlier phase. Of commoner, yeoman origins, his sympathies did lie with the goals that the Parliament had set for itself. The compromises he made were those dictated by the balance of forces, rather than his own predilections. In that sense, he was not an advocate of absolute power for himself, as the kings before him had been. Even though he ruled like a dictator, he refrained from using divine sanction for his rule, or the rituals and titles that went with it.

Oliver Cromwell ruled without care for parliamentary sanction, but he reversed many of the policies of the Monarchy and considered the interests of the new gentry and the middle classes. In 1649 he put down the Irish rebellion and conquered Scotland in 1650-51, thus defeating forces considered supportive of the Monarchy, followed by wars with the Dutch Republic and with Spain.

Cromwell dissolved the Rump Parliament in 1653, over differences on religious policy and finances during rebellions. He created a new Parliament with 140 people of his own choice, soon dissolved that too and took for himself the title of "Lord Protector", to distinguish from the title of King. The Protectorate had a constitution called the Instrument of Government, and power was shared by the Lord Protector and the Council of State. The Parliament created by it included representatives from Scotland and Ireland besides England. They were elected, but of course on a very restricted franchise, based on private property, that for its time meant essentially that the representatives would be the landed aristocracy, including new gentry. The Parliament could now constitutionally make laws and impose taxes. It produced what is regarded as the first written constitution in England. There was a lot of sale of land, particularly of the Church and Royalists and the Crown officials, furthering the consolidation of the new gentry and the privilege of private property. Navigation Acts of 1651 helped promote commercial capital and colonial interests.

Civil War had not ended during the Commonwealth. The New Model Army and its domination, despite its purges and changes in composition, made it an important player during the Commonwealth. It had helped put down rebellions of the Irish and the Scots, and it had fought the Royalist forces on the side of Parliament. In terms of religion, Cromwell had favoured the Puritans, as opposed to Catholics, seen as identified with Charles I and James I, or the Anglican Church, supportive of the social and religious compact arrived at by the Tudors in their consolidation of the monarchical nation state in the 16th century, with landholdings and important positions in the Court well into the 17th century.

Cromwell himself died, succeeded by his son Richard, but lack of control on his part facilitated an invitation to the son of former king Charles, who made conciliatory overtures and came back to the throne as Charles II. Thus ended the experiment of Commonwealth, with a Restoration.

6.6 RESTORATION (1660) AND GLORIOUS REVOLUTION (1688)

If the Commonwealth had failed in creating stability and co-operation with the Parliament, so did the Restoration of the monarchy that followed it, despite an official end of the Civil War. The contradiction within the polity was inherent in the fact that a Monarchy had now been restored by a victorious Parliament. The House of Lords was also restored, where the nominated members of the king held sway but House of Commons in which the elected component was significant, also became important.

The result of this was that both those who favoured Monarchy and those who favoured Parliament as the supreme authority had to carry their fight *into* the Parliament, rather than resolve the matter through armed battles of militias on this side or that. Those who favoured "Court", (those dependent on Court appointments and positions and belonging to the titled nobility, sympathetic to the prerogatives of divine right of kings) came to be known as Tories. Those who were critical (and had their social base in the gentry, the new landed aristocracy, and favoured decentralization of authority) were called Whigs. They had their base in the "country", where ownership of land by them made them powerful and prosperous, and among those who gained new wealth from commercial capitalism following the Navigation Acts and expansion of legitimate trade and commerce through monopolies in trade.

These social and political conflicts also impinged on religious differences. The preferences of Charles II, and James II after him, for Catholicism were dubbed unpatriotic and identified with Spain, apart from infringing upon opportunities for other religious sects within the administrative set up. Although the Court of Star Chamber and other such courts dissolved during the Commonwealth were not restored along with the Monarchy, nevertheless the preferences for Catholics and their appointments tended to put power in the hands of those who favoured monarchy, and therefore central control in administration.

By the 1670s, Tories and Whigs were well defined political groups within the Parliament, and in 1679 the Whigs pushed through the *Habeas Corpus Act* that institutionalized the protection and rights of private property, guard against arbitrary power of the king through set procedures for trial and punishment and legal rights of those accused. In this context, when the powers of king and parliament was a strongly contested constitutional issue and James II stubbornly exercised his prerogatives, the parliament majority favouring Whigs, invited William and Mary of Orange, in Holland, to accept the throne and restore Protestantism. The Settlement hence arrived at came to be known as the "Glorious Revolution". It came to be termed as "Glorious Revolution" by historians linked with the Whigs, because it put the rights of Parliament on a sound foundation, making Parliament a structural component of the English polity. The *Bill of Rights* passed in 1689 institutionalised this structure, by restating the rights of Parliament. It marked the origin of the constitutional parliamentary representative system with two Houses of Parliament that has become the blue print for many states in the modern world.

In class terms it established the social and political domination of the landed gentry that was to last through the eighteenth century: the elections to the

Parliament, we must remember, were based on property qualifications, which restricted franchise. These elections not only ensured the pervasive influence of gentry in parliamentary legislation, but also guaranteed that the social composition of the Parliament was such that most members belonged to this class. Anglicanism continued to be State religion, and Puritanism that enjoyed adherence among middle classes remained without clout in political affairs. Given the nature of economic development here, the gentry was far more open to entry of newcomers into their class, and far more accommodative of the commercial, and later industrial, interests, which gave to the English polity a reformist constitutionalism, as compared with Europe, where the eighteenth century saw a contestation between absolutism and titled nobility on one side, and opposing forces that took on a revolutionary form.

6.7 RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS AND POLITICS

Religious conflicts were intertwined with the politics of the time not only because religious beliefs were all pervasive, but because the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw intense religious wars. The Tudor kings and the Stuart rulers had their own personal predilections as well as bases of support for the Monarchy as an institution, while those opposed to Absolutism did not necessarily subscribe to the same religion.

In the sixteenth century, on the question of religious affiliation, the Parliament had supported the Tudors against the Catholic Church and its international jurisdiction. England became gradually independent of the declining Holy Roman Empire, challenged the Catholic Spanish Empire in the seas and had its own navigation plans and voyages. The Reformation and the confiscation of monastic lands and their sale (1536-40) created a land market and made land a commodity to be bought and sold in the market, which means it could be bought by non-noble classes or those from the nobility who had not "held" land as feudal tenure and been part of the vassalage system. Thus the conflict between Church and State was intrinsic to the rise of new economy and the social classes that benefited from it, and it was natural that the Parliament, by now dominated by these interests, should support the New Monarchy in this religious conflict.

In the seventeenth century, religion continued to regulate and influence social life. It was present at all stages of a person's life from baptism to burial, was the main agency of education and socialization at the level of the village and the parish and in the towns. It defended the existing social and political order, just as it had defended feudalism in the Middle Ages. Social conflicts therefore, even in the seventeenth century, inevitably assumed a religious form and conflictual ideas were invariably couched in religious terms. Religious pamphlets thus proliferated and dominated much of the debate during the years of the English Revolution, on both sides. The defense of Monarchy and the espousal of republicanism were expressed through strong religious arguments by their proponents.

When James ascended the throne, the Calvinist and the Catholic clergy organized to pull him in different directions and the Puritan clergy expected him to address matters of Church abuses. Charles II favoured Catholics, as did James II after him, which to many Parliamentarians seemed unpatriotic because Catholicism was identified with Spain or the Dutch state, or plain and simple attack on religious tolerance and a conspiracy to restore Catholicism in England, including reversal

of the Church lands. William Laud, the main Minister of Charles was Arminian and it was thought that all the gains of Reformation and of parliamentary prerogatives would get completely eroded under Charles. Cromwell and the Republic in which the Puritans held sway was a backlash to these apprehensions. With these opposing perspectives, the issues of religion also became intertwined with conflicts over centralization and decentralization of governance and administration.

Most often the immediate cause of conflicts between the Crown and the Parliament arose over the needs to finance the curbing of rebellions: during the Stuart regime the Scots and the Irish rebelled often enough for the Crown to demand taxes in order to finance his standing armies, and this tax tended to fall primarily on the gentry who had gained from the commercialization of agriculture or on the merchants who gained from monopolies in trade, rather than the titled nobility who enjoyed certain privileges regarding taxation in return for support to the Monarchy. Religious conflict became inevitable in these rebellions, because the Scots and Irish also saw these as attempts to impose the Anglican Church of England, and in the case of Irish to impose Protestant landlords on a majority Catholic peasantry. With the Dutch and the French too the trade rivalries were compounded by the differing state religions, the Monarchy and the Parliament having opposing perspectives not only on the issue of patriotism but also religion, with the Parliament finally inviting William and Mary of Orange to take over the throne affecting the Glorious Revolution, discussed above.

6.8 INTELLECTUAL TRADITIONS

The intellectual traditions associated with the English Revolution are rich and varied, ranging from the royalist-conservative to the incipient utopian-socialist. The ideas that sprang forth from the Renaissance, Reformation, Counter Reformation, the new inventions and scientific discoveries regarding universe and place of earth in it brought forth a rich legacy that came to be represented in some form or the other by different groups during the English Revolution. In political actions, they were represented by the Royalists, the Fifth Monarchy men, the Puritans, the Levellers and the Diggers, the Quakers, and others who questioned baptism and marriage rituals, and yet others who questioned the idea of heaven and hell. Puritanism contributed a significant ideology in the socio-political environment of the years, and brought about a split not just in the religious lives, but also the political affiliations, best seen in the conflict between King and Parliament and in the civil war, with a strong social basis across English society. It provided political weight to the Parliament. The Levellers was a radical political movement centred mainly around London who represented small proprietors, were opposed to enclosures of land by the rich gentry which rendered the smaller peasantry landless. They were called Levellers because they also opposed the taking over of common lands over which all had rights of use. Their important leaders were John Lilbourne and John Wildman, who formulated their democratic programme that included enhanced suffrage (although not every adult male and certainly not women) and other political reforms that may curb the power of the rich landed gentry. They were also opposed to trade monopolies and corporate privileges, and sought new laws to protect the "small" people.

The most radical were the Diggers, who called themselves the "True Levellers", as they actually dug out a landlord's field and asserted right of all to the produce,

and opposed the very idea of private property and class distinctions altogether. Given the upper class composition of the Parliament, they questioned the Parliament authority to speak for all the people. They were inspired by thoughts of egalitarianism and justice and freedom, although they had no concrete programmes and later historians termed their vision as utopian and far ahead of its times. Their main leader was Winstanley and they tried to set up a model community, but were unsuccessful. The levellers and the Diggers were not unacceptable even to the Republic.

6.9 QUESTIONS OF REVOLUTION AND CIVIL WAR

There is a debate among historians on whether the period in question should be termed as Revolution or Civil War, with those inclined towards class analysis or social analysis of the events terming it as Revolution. England during this period, both because of the social and economic changes noted above and for the evolution towards a constitutional system, saw fundamental changes that are intrinsic to a modern capitalist society. In that sense it has been termed a Revolution, despite its not having many of the characteristics of the later revolutions in the modern world, which brought about new political regimes and a qualitative change in balance of class forces. This is the consensus, even though new studies of the cataclysmic revolutions now tend towards studying the hitherto neglected continuities.

On the other hand, other historians have tended to interpret these changes as not so fundamental, especially since the short interval of the Commonwealth was followed by Restoration of the Monarchy, which has continued to have a significant presence, if not power in the English structure. The constitutional monarchy is seen as absence of revolution, and simply as a struggle between two political institutions that took on the character of essentially a Civil War, and hence this nomenclature.

From our survey of events and the nature of conflict during these years we have seen that armed conflicts occurred almost through this entire period, from the succession of the Stuarts to the throne till the Restoration, finally coming to an end only with the Settlement of 1688. However, we can say that far from simply a Civil War, the larger epithet of Revolution, in the sense of attempts at social and political advance (if not transformation), is more pertinent. These publications also point towards issues that were to continue to concern modern society henceforth: liberty, representation and sovereignty, individual religious freedom, freedom of speech and association; and above all, the right to private property, which is the hallmark of a bourgeois capitalist society. In a way, then, this struggle between King and Parliament did signify a thrust towards the elimination of the legacies of feudalism and a preparation for doing away with the obstacles to free development of productive forces and production relations, including the religious and intellectual fetters that impeded change.

On the other hand, it was obvious that kings could no longer continue in the old ways, with aspirations akin to the absolutist monarchs of the Continent. There was nothing to prevent individual kings from harbouring aspirations of power and preference for particular religious sects or social groupings. In this lay the seeds of future conflict that characterized the period of the Restoration,

transcended the settlement of the Glorious Revolution, and continued well into the eighteenth century with its formations of political parties, in which the King was a crucial factor.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Describe the role of Oliver Cromwell in the Commonwealth.

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2) Discuss the major intellectual trends during the English Revolution.

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6.10 LET US SUM UP

From our survey and analysis of the events and developments that constituted the English Revolution, and the ensuing Restoration and 'Glorious Revolution', you would have gained an idea that this was a very significant period in English history. It created the basis for the future British political system characterized as constitutional monarchy. It also laid the seeds for the similarities and differences between Britain and the European Continent, which persist to this day.

We have tried to interpret the English Revolution in the light of the broader context of 17th century Europe. The social, economic and intellectual developments of this period formed the basis for the political conflicts, particularly the contest for power between the King and the Parliament, and subsequently for power within the Parliament as it became an important institution in the English political system. There were the seeds of the future accommodations and class alliances between the upper classes that continued to characterize British history.

Although this period also involved armed conflicts between the opposing forces, the fundamental issues of the English Revolution centred around the creation of conditions, social and political, that would allow the growth of capitalism and of modernity after the decline of feudal society. The form this took, that of a Revolution, so different and constrained as compared to the later revolutions on the Continent, was partly due to the specific call configuration of English society and the social base of the Monarchy in England, and partly due to the fact that feudalism declined and there was a long period between the decline of feudalism and the development of capitalism, much longer than on the Continent which allowed for political developments to be in the long-term more continuously

reformative rather than cataclysmic. The English Revolution was the first evidence of this, and Restoration was as much a part of the English Revolution as the Republic was.

6.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) See Section 6.3
2) See Section 6.4

Check Your Progress 2

1) See Section 6.5
2) See Section 6.8

UNIT 7 THE MODERN SCIENCE*

Structure

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will understand the following aspects about development of science in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:

- nature of modern science especially its experimental nature,
- major development in various fields of science,
- different interpretations of scientific development by historians; and
- the role of women in development of science.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Science is often defined as the systematic study of the natural phenomenon. Its basic human tools are observation and experiment. *Science* is the concerted human effort to understand, or to understand better, the history of the natural world and how the natural world works, with observable physical evidence as the basis of that understanding. Defined in this manner, scientific progress, the driving force for the rise of modernity, requires a critical mind, free of prejudice and opens to new ways of thinking. Presently, science is used in a narrow technocratic social world. This has led to an understanding that whatever is technically feasible and achievable, we should attain that, regardless of human and environmental cost. However, modern science itself emerged as a neutral and value-free discipline in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in a slow and long process. It was only a couple of centuries later that it was subjected to the control of the ruling oligarchies who misused scientific knowledge to destroy mother earth's environment or to create weapons of mass-destruction which can wipe out the entire human civilization. Sometimes in the initial phase of development, modern science was

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a dangerous business as it came into conflict with the established authority of Church in Europe. In 1600, the Italian monk Giordano Bruno was sentenced to death and burned at the stake because he believed in free thinking in philosophy and science. Famous Scientist Galileo Galilei narrowly avoided the same fate but only by publicly renouncing his support of Copernicus' heliocentric view (the view that planets including earth revolves round the sun.) In this Unit, we will discuss the story of main developments of modern science in Europe in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the interpretations of these developments, the causes for its development, the context of its development and its impact on society and culture.

7.2 NATURE OF MODERN SCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

Modern science tries to understand and explain how nature works and why things look to us as they exist. "Natural" here refers to empirical or "sensible," that is, only that which we can detect — somehow — with our senses or with tools that are extension of our senses. It involves explanations that are meticulous, accurate and possess predictive power. In addition to being limited to studying the natural world, scientific knowledge is limited by being inherently uncertain to varying degrees. It does not claim absolute, eternal, fixed, infallible or permanent truth. It is based on a realistic perception of the physical universe as existing apart from our sensory perception of it. It is also assumed that humans have potential to accurately perceive and understand the world and its working. Empirically-accessible processes are enough to explain or account for natural phenomena or events. Scientists also assume that nature function uniformly in both space and time (unless we have evidence to the contrary). Since our scientific knowledge is based only on human sensory experience of the natural world, it is subject to the limitations. For example, we cannot see either infrared or ultraviolet light and we cannot hear extremely high or low sounds. But there may be tools which may enhance power of our observations through senses, there are still limits to accuracy and range of instruments made by humans. Sometimes our previously held notions of the world or some phenomenon in the world continue to influence our perception as the saying goes that we see with our minds, and not with our eyes. Scientific knowledge is, therefore, necessarily contingent or dependent knowledge and therefore uncertain, rather than absolute like metaphysical knowledge (which is 100% certain, fixed and infallible). Being based on available data that are evaluated and assessed, scientific knowledge is subject to modification in the light of new evidence and new ways of thinking. Nevertheless It is extremely important to understand that science only offer tentative clarification about the functioning of the universe, even then, scientific ideas are still the most dependable account of the nature. In the absence of certainty regarding the absolute truth of scientific explanations, scientists use comparative critical thinking to determine which explanation is better in a number of alternatives. Because it is equally faulty to assume that any and all explanations are equally valid or worthy and that truth is merely a matter of opinion.

7.3 SOME MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS IN DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE IN SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

In this section, we will discuss some important areas of modern science and how they developed in the early modern period.

7.3.1 Developments in Astronomy and Physics

The views of Aristotle and Ptolemy were shattered by Nicholas Copernicus (1473-1543). In his book *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* (published posthumously in 1543 because of apprehension of the scorn of fellow astronomers), Copernicus suggested that the sun was the centre of our planetary system and that and planets including earth moved around it in spherical orbits. This Heliocentric conception that the sun — and not the earth — was the centre of the universe contradicted contemporary dominant thinking and challenged the traditional teachings on the subject of hundreds of years. Copernicus' book had enormous scientific and religious consequences. By characterizing the earth as just another planet, he destroyed the impression that the earthly world was different from the heavenly world. Copernicus' ideas influenced others in the field of science. A Danish astronomer, Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), set the stage for the study of modern astronomy by building an observatory and collecting data for over twenty years on the location of the stars and planets. His greatest contribution was collection of huge amount of data, yet his limited knowledge of mathematics prevented Brahe from making much sense out of the data. Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), a German astronomer and assistant to Brahe, used his data to support Brahe's data and Copernicus' idea that the planets move around the sun in elliptical, not circular, orbits. Kepler's three laws of planetary motion were based on mathematical calculations and accurately predicted the movements of planets in a sun-centered universe. His work demolished the old systems of Aristotle and Ptolemy.

The word *scientist* itself was coined in 1840 although the 17th century is revered as an age of great scientific developments. This was the century of Galileo, Kepler, Bacon, Pascal, Descartes, and Newton. They called themselves natural philosophers. Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) lived in a time when astronomy and astrology were conjoined. Johannes Kepler, born in Germany, was a devout Christian (a passionate Lutheran) who was motivated to study science by his belief that God had created the world according to an intelligible plan that is accessible through the natural power of human reason that God had granted human beings. Kepler believed that the world was created by a Creator who used geometry to establish order and harmony, and that this harmony could be explained through musical terms. He thought his Celestial Physics merely revealed God's geometrical plan for the universe. Similarly, Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) was also acquainted with several different fields of science. He did not choose just one specific profession. He was good at playing the lute and the organ, he could draw and paint well.. He studied medicine, explored mathematics and he acclaimed geometry, too. He was also interested in theology too.

In 1608, Europe already had low power telescopes known as spyglasses which is credited to Hans Lippershey, a Dutchman. The magnifying power of these initial telescopes was very limited. There was a captive market for these. Galileo knew about this invention of a new optical instrument. He started designing his own improved versions, with higher magnification. His first telescopes only improved the view to eighth power, but his telescope steadily improved. Galileo's telescope was now capable of magnifying about ten times more than normal vision although it had a rather narrow field of view. The observations with the help of this instrument by Galileo resulted in the discovery of the mountains and craters of the Moon and the moons of the Jupiter's, the descriptions of the stages of the Venus, the drawings of the sunspots which all proved the heliocentric view of the world.

In Galileo's time artillery used cannonballs which were indistinctively made of lead, iron, or other materials and had the same caliber (i.e., diameter), but different weight. Consequently, to standardize the range of the gunfire, the gunner had to adjust the explosive charge in relation to the cannonball utilized. The quantity of gunpowder had to be proportionally greater, in respect to the greater weight. Galileo's compass could be used as a gunner's gauge, because it established the relation between the weight and the volume of the different materials. Using observation rather than speculation to help him formulate ideas — such as his laws on the motion of falling bodies — Galileo established experimentation, the cornerstone of modern science.

He applied experimental methods to astronomy by using the newly invented telescope. His observations using this instrument of the four moons of Jupiter, and a mountainous surface of the moon, destroyed an earlier notion that planets were crystal spheres. It demolished the notion that the earth was the centre of the universe and around it moved separate, transparent crystal spheres: the moon, the sun, five planets, and fixed stars. Galileo's evidence reinforced and confirmed the views of Copernicus. Following the publication of his book, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* (1632), which openly criticized the works of Aristotle and Ptolemy, Galileo was arrested, imprisoned, tried for heresy (belief or view contrary to orthodox Christian beliefs) by the Papal Inquisition (medieval Christian institution for suppressing the heresy), and forced to publicly repudiate his views. In modern times, Galileo's trial has come to symbolize the conflict between religious beliefs and scientific knowledge.

There was societal and institutional support for scientific works like that of Galileo. Galileo was a prominent member of the famous scientific circle known as The Pinelli Circle. Many well-known people gathered in Giovanni Vincenzio Pinelli's house, where Galilei lived too. Pinelli himself was a humanist in Padua who was interested in several fields of knowledge. In1603, Prince Federico Cesi established the intellectual workshop of the Accademia dei Lincei (The Academy of Lynxes). This demonstrates that patronage from rich and powerful people helped spread of scientific enquiry and a culture supportive of it.

The greatest figure of the century was perhaps Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), an Englishman. In his book *Principia Mathematica* (1687), he integrated the ideas of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo into one system of mathematical laws to explain the orderly manner the three laws of motion of bodies and his theory of the law of universal gravitation. According to this law, everybody in the universe attracts every other body in precise mathematical relationships and the precise

force of this attraction depends on the mass of bodies and distance between them. Newton's law mathematically proved that the sun, moon, earth, planets, and all other bodies moved in accordance with the same basic force of gravitation. Such proof showed that the universe operated by rules that could be explained in the language of mathematics. It is common amongst interpreters of Newton to neglect or even ignore completely Newton's work in alchemy and theology-pretending that it was either a deviation, or at best irrelevant to his most important work. This view makes no senses as Newton's writings shows that he had deep interest in both subjects. This was related in crucial ways to his work in mechanics and optics. Indeed, in his alchemical research he was partly looking for underlying explanations and/or principles which might bear on his discoveries in optics and mechanics. His theological work was part and parcel of his search for general philosophical principles. So his interest in theological matters was not the abnormality of a weird man, but followed naturally from his desire to get to the bottom of things, and find out basic truths about the universe. This may been as argued by some historians that his interest in these questions was precipitated by the necessity for a fellow of Trinity college to be ordained into the Anglican Church, and to affirm his orthodox religious beliefs. Was it simply the question of immediate material benefit in Newton's interest in theology? We should also keep in mind that Newton was living under the influence of a thousand years of Christian religion on the European society of his day.

7.3.2 Mathematics as a Tool

The invention of the logarithm in the early 17th Century by John Napier (and later improved by Napier and Henry Briggs) contributed to the advance of science, astronomy and mathematics by making some difficult calculations relatively easy. It was one of the most significant mathematical developments of the age, and 17th Century physicists like Kepler and Newton could never have performed the complex calculations needed for their works without it. The French astronomer and mathematician Pierre Simon Laplace remarked, almost two centuries later, that Napier, by halving the labours of astronomers, had doubled their lifetimes. The Frenchman René Descartes (1596-1650) developed analytic geometry and Cartesian coordinates in the mid-17th Century. The orbits of the planets to could be plotted on a graph with the help of these. It also laid the foundations for the later development of calculus. Newton and, independently, the German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716), completely revolutionized mathematics by the development of infinitesimal calculus, with its two main operations, differentiation and integration. There was a controversy over the claim of its development. Newton probably developed his work before Leibniz, but Leibniz published his first, leading to a long and bitter quarrel. Whatever the truth behind the various claims, though, it is Leibniz's calculus notation that is the one still in use today. Calculus has applications in various fields knowledge engineering, economics, medicine, and astronomy. Both Newton and Leibniz also contributed greatly in other areas of mathematics, including Newton's contributions to a generalized binomial theorem, the theory of finite differences and the use of infinite power series, and Leibniz's development of a mechanical forerunner to the computer and the use of matrices to solve linear equations. In eighteenth century later the Bernoulli Brothers, Jacob and Johann of Basel in Switzerland further developed Leibniz's infinitesimal calculus.

7.3.3 Development in Non-Quantitative Fields

William Gilbert (1544-1603) published a book in 1600,*On the magnet*, which became a standard work on electrical and magnetic phenomena throughout Europe. In it, Gilbert distinguished between magnetism and static (known as the amber effect). He also compared the magnet's polarity to the polarity of the Earth, and developed an entire magnetic philosophy on this analogy. Gilbert's findings suggested that magnetism was the soul of the Earth, and that a perfectly spherical lodestone, when aligned with the Earth's poles, would spin on its axis, just as the Earth spins on its axis over a period of 24 hours. Gilbert was in fact debunking the traditional cosmologists' belief that the Earth was fixed at the centre of the universe, and he provided food for thought for Galileo, who eventually came up with the proposition that the Earth revolves around the Sun. He examined two strictly circumscribed phenomena hitherto immersed in heaps of inaccuracies and folklore, namely, the enigmatic behaviors of pieces of lodestone and of amber, into two distinct, budding branches of specialized inquiry– those of magnetism and of electricity. Gilbert now pooled, checked, and orderly recorded much practice-gained experience gathered by others; established by means of firsthand experimentation numerous other empirical properties of electric and magnetic substances.

William Harvey (1578-1657) was an English physician who had studied at the University of Padua. Harvey's research was furthered through the dissection of animals. He first revealed his findings at the College of Physicians in 1616, and in 1628 he published his theories in a book entitled *An Anatomical Study of the Motion of the Heart and of the Blood in Animals*, where he explained how the heart propelled the blood in a circular course through the body. Harvey was also the first to suggest that humans and other mammals reproduced via the fertilisation of an egg by sperm. It took a further two centuries before a mammalian egg was finally observed, but nonetheless Harvey's theory won credibility during his lifetime.

7.3.4 From Alchemy to Chemistry

Historically, alchemy referred to both the exploration of nature and an early philosophical and spiritual discipline that combined chemistry with metal work. The goals of alchemy were manifold. The alchemists motive was to find the "elixir of life" (a substance with magical properties that would bring wealth, health, and immortality). They also wanted to find or make a substance called the "philosopher's stone," which when heated and combined with "base" (non-precious metals such as copper and iron) would turn it into gold by a process called transmutation. They also wished to discover the relationship of humans to the universe and use that knowledge to improve the human spirit. So, in Alchemy scientific and mysticism merged. With the rise of modern science, alchemists were often projected as charlatans and pretenders. But many alchemists were in fact serious-minded practitioners whose work helped lay the groundwork for modern chemistry and medicine. Alchemists contribution to chemical industries: basic metallurgy, metalworking, the production of inks, dyes, paints, and cosmetics, leather-tanning, and the preparation of extracts and liquors cannot be denied. It was a seventeenth century German alchemist who isolated phosphorus, and another German alchemist of the same period who developed a porcelain material that broke China's centuries-old monopoly on one of the world's most

expensive commodities. In 1662, Robert Boyle (1627-1691) articulated Boyle's law, which states that the volume of a gas is correlated to the pressure on it. For this and other important contributions to *scientific inquiry*, Boyle is sometimes called the father of modern chemistry. Like others of his times he called himself a natural philosopher. Boyle wrote two papers on the transmutation of the elements, claiming to have changed gold into mercury by means of "quicksilver," the ingredients of which he did not reveal. He was in this way rooted in alchemy.

Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier was a pioneer who discovered a new chemistry based on experimentation and observation and he made a systematic analysis of his findings. Chemistry was still mired in the legacy of the alchemist as we have seen from the example of Boyle. Even the simple process of combustion or burning of any substance in air was not clear even at the beginning of eighteenth century. German scientist Georg Ernst Stahl early in the 18th century believed that everything that burned contained a common element of fire. He named this element *phlogiston*, derived from a Greek word for ignitable material. Sthal's experiment found that charcoal lost weight when it burned. Stahl believed that any material lost when burned and this was the proof of the fact a substance lost weight when burnt because of the loss of its phlogiston element in the air. Since there was no solid explanation in those days about the phenomenon of burning, explanation, people accepted readily it. Lavoisier conducted experiments with phosphorus and sulfur, both of which easy to burn and Lavoisier found that they gained weight by burning in the air. This was contrary to Sthal's hypothesis on burning or combustion. Using *lead calx* for his experiments (a substance formed from an ore or mineral when heated or oxide of a metal in modern language of chemistry), he was able to show that it gained in weight when burned, probably because it combined with air and same air was released when the *calx* or lead oxide was heated. This made Lavoisier doubtful of the existence of *phlogiston*. Although Lavoisier now realized that burning or combustion actually somehow involved air, but since he was still ignorant about the exact composition of air, he could not go any further. In August 1774, the famous English scientist Joseph Priestley met with Lavoisier in Paris. He shared his experience about his experiment of heating mercury *calx* in which a gas was obtained in which a candle burned more easily. Priestley believed that this 'new gas' helped in burning and caused candles to burn longer because it was free of phlogiston. For this reason, he called the gas that he obtained by burning mercury *calx* "dephlogisticated gas".

In Paris, the inquisitive Lavoisier repeated Priestley's experiment with mercury and some other metal oxides. His conclusion was that the air was a compound of many elements or gases. At least, he argued, there were two components: one that reacted with the metal and helped the process of burning and the another that obstruct burning process. By 1777, Lavoisier proposed a new theory of burning or combustion that rejected the Sthal's notion of existence of phlogiston. Combustion or burning was explained as a chemical reaction of a combustible metal or an organic substance with that part of common air that helped in the process of burning. In 1779, he announced to the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris that he found in his experiments that most acids contained this type of air. Lavoisier named it *oxygène*. So the Stahl's *phlogiston* was imaginary. In new theory of combustion oxygen now played the central role.

In 1766, Englishman Henry Cavendish obtained a gas that burned easily. Priestley noted that when gas obtained by him and common air were burned with a spark in a closed container, a small amount of dew-like substance was found on the walls of glass container. When Cavendish repeated the experiment, he found that this dew like substance was actually water. Cavendish still interpreted the findings of his experiments in terms of phlogiston and thought the water was present in each of the two airs before the process of burning. Lavoisier explained that burning or combustion involve chemical reaction with oxygen; however, until he could explain the combustion of new gas obtained by Cavendish, some would still doubt his new chemistry. In June 1783, Lavoisier combined oxygen with Cavendish 'new gas', and obtained water. His conclusion was that water was not an element but a compound of oxygen and Cavendish's 'new air' , which we now know as hydrogen. To support his claim, Lavoisier decomposed water into oxygen and hydrogen. Now that the chemical composition of water was known, the last doubt to throwing away phlogiston hypothesis was removed. Lavoisier adopted the long-neglected idea of an element as originally proposed by Robert Boyle more than a century earlier. They retained the names from the past of many simple substances, or elements. But when an element combined with another element, the compound's name now reflected something about its chemical composition. Lavoisier's new chemistry, expounded in his *Elements of Chemistry* (1789) incorporated many new aspects like the impact of heating on actual chemical reactions, the exact nature of gases, various chemical reactions of acids and bases which combined to form salts, and the description of various apparatuses used to perform chemical experiments in laboratories. Lavoisier defined the Law of the Conservation of Mass in the following words "... in every chemical reaction an equal quantity of matter exists both before and after the chemical reaction. He also listed the then-known elements.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Describe the contributions of natural philosophers in the development of astronomy and physics in seventeenth century.

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2) Discuss the development of science in non-quantitative fields in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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7.4 INTERPRETING SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS OF SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

The scientific development of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have been interpreted in many ways by scholars. In 1943 the French historian Alexandre Koyré described the scientific advance of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a quantum jump or qualitative break with the past pattern of human thinking. For him, it was the most insightful development in human thinking, a real revolution created by the human mind since Greek antiquity. It made fundamental changes in human culture and way of life and left a permanent mark on the human mind. Later, the English historian Herbert Butterfield also termed it as a major revolution, something spectacular since the rise of Christianity. According to him, compared to this great epoch making transformation, the Renaissance and Reformation were simple episodes in the history of humankind. He emphasised that this Scientific Revolution was the real origin of the modern world. These early historians of science, thus, depicted it as a consistent, pioneering revolution event that profoundly and without end altered human perceptions of the universe and ways and means by which human beings interacted with nature and environment. It was the singular moment for the entry of modernity in our lives. at which the world was abruptly made modern. It was a libertarian in the sense that it removed superstitious and irrational way of thinking that had persisted for centuries.

We have mentioned earlier that although many seventeenth century practitioners expressed their intention to bring about a radical intellectual change, they used no term such as Science or Revolution to refer to what they were doing. They called themselves natural philosophers and many of them were interested in issues and problems of theology, some were immersed in practices of alchemy. So many historians find the idea of a Scientific Revolution an uneasy one. Many historians are now question and criticize that there was sudden and catastrophic change that occurred in Western Europe, particularly in the fixed time period of seventeenth or eighteenth century that can be marked as the Scientific Revolution. There are also doubts about the cultural notion science manifested in a unique manner in the seventeenth century. Now scholars argue science was involved in cultural practices which found expression in a variety of ways and that there can be a large number of ways and methods through which human beings can aim to understand, explain, and control nature and environment. Every Method may emerge in a particular cultural setting and can have its own features and may herald a different kind of change in human thinking and perception. There cannot be a unique and single method to obtain knowledge which is universal or eternal of all times and all places. The so called scientific method— a consistent, universal, and efficient manner of creating knowledge that can be traced in the seventeenth is a cultural specific product, they argue. The seventeenth-century's knowledge systems was only a continuation of medieval knowledge systems. It did not emerge in a vacuum. We cannot assert with certainty that medieval world ceased to exist at this particular point or from this particular time period modern way of thinking became the hallmark of human consciousness and perception. The seventeenth century scientific practitioners often believed and practised in certain cultural practices what we may perceive as 'medieval' or 'modern'.

Some historians argue that the idea of scientific development must be situated in the wider cultural and social context of seventeenth and eighteenth century. in other words, they feel that the scientific changes of the seventeenth century must be interoperated in the context of changes in socio-economic, political, and cultural conditions or patterns of thinking. More importantly, some historians now wish to understand the development of scientific endeavour in the concrete historical circumstances of those times. What actually transpired and what was the social cultural milieu of the period when a particular mode of science was taking root? How did the institutions help in obtaining and creating scientific knowledges and how this base expanded with the passage of time? These are important consideration of historians of science. Some historians analyse the actual stories of people who wrought such changes? We have seen that there were prominent circles patronized by the rich and powerful people in the seventeenth century and later institutionalization of scientific efforts in the form of various academies etc. It is important to see that modern science emerges at a time when the institutions of the Middle Ages, such as the Church, the universities and the established professions of jurisprudence, theology and medicine, were declining but when the social and political order of modern society had not yet consolidated. It was in this period of transition and turmoil that modern science emerges. However, by the late seventeenth century with the growth of powerful monarchs in some countries of Europe, they tried to use it for their own purpose. The Restoration government in England in 1660s purged the reformed universities of the adherents of the new experimental natural philosophy and re-established the authority of the Church and state. This period was also the period of the institutionalization of science under the patronage of the absolute state. This was marked by the foundation of the Royal Society in London in 1662 by Charles II, the Academic des Sciences in Paris in 1666 by Louis XIV. and the Akademie des Wissenschaften in Berlin in 1700. The political integration of science by royal edicts into the state compromised its radical function.

The American sociologist, Robert K. Merton, is the main pioneer of the sociology of science. His studies focused on sociological aspects of the scientific enterprise. His thesis, “Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth-Century England”, demonstrated how Puritanism unintentionally provided social and cultural support for the science emerging in 17th -century England. He used massive amount of statistical and historical data to support his cautiously drawn conclusions that Puritanism provided a system of values and beliefs which fostered the development of seventeenth-century English science. Edgar Zilsel, an Austrian philosopher/scientist, adopted a more moderate economic-deterministic approach in his researches. He propounds the idea that the early capitalistic society broke down the ancient barriers separating the scholar from the craftsman, or what George Basalla (1986) identified as the 'man of formal knowledge' from the ´man of practical knowledge'. From antiquity through the Middle Ages, the philosopher and the priest were socially superior to the metallurgist, potter, ship-builder, or other craftsman. On the different extremes the scholar excelled in logic, speculative thinking, and mathematics while the craftsman has a special knowledge of the material objects. Hence, theory and practice were separated for centuries until the needs of an emerging capitalistic society joined them together to produce modern science.

Sometimes the traditional account of the development of science in seventeenth and eighteenth century read like the celebrations of the heroic achievements of

Great Men (not women!) making or creating Modernity. So what where are the voices of lesser participants (and sometimes of the laity). What were their reactions? Were they passive spectators? How did the forms of culture traditionally considered peripheral to, or even outside the 'science proper.' react or adapt to new mode of thinking prevalent in 'scientific circles'? As a result of questioning subjects and/or people previously left wholly or partly in the margins have come to be included in the narrative. Examples are subjects that (at the time) were nonmathematical and chiefly descriptive, like magnetism and illness; subjects that are scarcely practiced anymore, like musical science, and/or are held under grave suspicion, like alchemy; but also previously neglected contributors not of the first or even quite the second rank (e.g., hosts of ably experimenting Jesuits). Some people argue that the use of quantitative methods and mathematics was really novel and important in the seventeenth century. This really destroyed the centuries old Aristotelian notions of the universe and nature. If we agree with this viewpoint then naturally individuals like Galileo, Descartes, Huygens, and Newton extremely important. The traditional approach towards scientific developments emphasizes mathematical physics and astronomy. It is true that some significant developments did take place in the field of astronomy and physics but that was not entirely which constituted the Scientific Revolution. However, not all seventeenth century natural philosophy was mechanical or experimental. Nevertheless, the role of Mechanics in knowing about the nature certainly increased, and there were scientific disputes about the correctness of tools of mechanical and experimental methods in acquiring knowledge. These to some extent capture what is valuable in understanding about cultural change in this period.

Science can be understood only its historical context and we can understand the scientific works only in the cultural context in which they are created. Historians have long argued about the role of historical and social contexts in knowing about the process of development of a particular branch of science. Certainly, its development cannot be visualized in isolation from such context. The Science in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a collectively practiced, historically embedded phenomenon. So when sociological and historical context is accepted by scholars, they draw less attention to intellectual history of ideas, concepts, methods, evidences in themselves but emphasise more on the social factors like institutional form of scientific works, the role of socio-economic factors in development of science, and practical social uses or implication of scientific development for overall societal development . There is room for contingency in the story – not everything that happened was bound to happen, or was bound to happen the way it did happen. Historians of science have further become aware that there were more significant reasons for contemporary perceptions of modern-science-in-the-making as innately strange and disturbing than sheer backwardness and/or superstition. So we feel that multiple stories can be told about the scientific development of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

7.5 WOMEN AND MODERN SCIENCE

If we look for women in state sponsored Academies of Science, there was not a single woman as member in them in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but they were not absent completely from scientific fields. We come across one German astronomer Maria Winkelmann. Again Winkelmann was not the only one. It has been estimated that out of all German astronomers working in the

early eighteenth-century, 14 percent were women. In 1710, Maria Winkelmann petitioned the Berlin Academy for an appointment as assistant astronomer and calendar-maker when her husband and Academy astronomer (*Gottfried Kirch*) died. She was as a seasoned astronomer who had published astronomical observations under her husband's name while he was ill and dying. Although the great Leibniz, then President of the Academy, supported her claim, her request was denied. Then another interesting example is that of Laura Bassi (1711-1778), first woman to become a professor of physics at the University of Bologna in eighteenth century. It is amazing to note that she had twelve children. Did they not interfere in her scientific productivity? She published her studies on electricity and air pressure etc regularly. what made it possible? We know that in Europe, the child rearing practices for the upper classes made this possible. Soon after the birth of a child, it was handed over to a governess or wet nurse and reared in the countryside. A upper class mother might not see her child again until age of seven and about that age boys were sent to boarding schools. So probably this prerogative of a upper class woman allowed an uneasy fix between reproduction and her professional life. Yet the basic fact remains that modern science and professional life was not meant to be for women in the prevailing man-dominated society.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Critically evaluate the various interpretations of the scientific development of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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2) Explain the role of Women in Science in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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7.6 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have seen how the modern science as we know it germinated, how it spread to various fields and how nature-knowledge of one field was not entirely independent. The nature-knowledge of one kind was dependent on the others and the cumulative impact of these interactions made it sustainable in long-run. Although society and its culture was changing, the outlook and temperament was of the key figures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was still immersed in the medieval ideology and theology. It was not a complete break with the past. As was expected, women remained on the margin in this

discovery of nature-knowledge. Various interpretations of these developments has been offered but it appears a number of stories are possible.

7.7 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) See Sub-section 7.3.1

2) See Sub-section 7.3.3

Check Your Progress 2

1) See Section 7.4

2) See Section 7.5

UNIT 8 EUROPEAN POLITICS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY*

Structure

8.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should

- have a broad idea of the political developments in Europe from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century;
- be able to understand the similarities and differences in the politics of the countries constituting western, central and eastern Europe, and England;
- understand that politics was conducted at various levels: international politics, politics within nations or states, and the popular politics within nations as distinct but related to the broader politics within states;
- see that the forms of political activity varied in the different regions, and various levels of society;
- have an idea how the political developments of this period were linked to social and economic changes in these regions; and
- how these paved the way for French Revolution and the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution, which were to have reverberations throughout the world.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In a previous Unit we discussed the English Revolution of the mid-seventeenth century, also in the process noting some of the differences between political developments in England and the Continent. In this Unit, we will carry forward the story until the eve of the French Revolution in France and the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution in England, both of which had great ramifications for the rest of Europe and whose reverberations were felt throughout the world.

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By politics during this period we mean all forms of activities that contributed to changes in political behaviour and to the emergence or consolidation of certain types of political structures in the various regions of Europe. In the politics of this era are also encompassed the international conflicts and attempts to resolve them through war and diplomacy. Moreover, this is also the period when popular politics began to impinge on the politics at the broader level, finding voices or responses within Parliaments and state policies.

Although the period between the English Revolution and the outbreak of the French Revolution is generally seen as a period of transition, we will learn in this Unit that it has independent significance and saw crucial political developments, without which it would not be possible to explain why the French Revolution occurred in France and not in any other country at the end of the eighteenth century. The developments in the seventeenth and first half of eighteenth century also explain the later political trajectory of Central and Eastern Europe, the multilingual Austrian Empire, the evolution of German states, especially Prussia, and the Tsarist Empire, multilingual and almost colonial, with its Autocracy different from the Absolutist states like France. The seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century was an important period for the political evolution of these state structures and for politics in the different regions of Europe.

8.2 AN OVERVIEW OF TRENDS

Despite the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution, not to speak of the English revolution and the growth of international commerce, and the emergence of new social classes, the Europe of second half of the seventeenth and a greater part of the eighteenth century was still overwhelmingly a world of privilege, tempered no doubt by protests that had far greater ramifications than medieval or early modern protests in the different regions of Europe. This period saw the transformation of privileges and also the challenge to these privileges.

In the realm of politics, this was manifested in the consolidation of monarchies that claimed their status to be above politics, but were now forced to bow to justifications of rule of law and obligations towards their subjects. The people, including the nobility and religious clergy, were their subjects, rather than citizens. And the idea of popular sovereignty and the principles of what constituted the nation did not enter the world of popular politics until the end of the 18th century.

Again, despite the consolidation of national monarchies, the monarchs still remained the primary identification of the seventeenth and eighteenth century states, so much so that wars of successions and marriage alliances and the agreements between the royal houses could, and did change the territorial boundaries of the nation state (more realistically the kingdoms ruled by particular dynasties).

The representative institutions across Europe were still mainly those of the privileged, dominated essentially by the nobility, those who were nobility by birth, but increasingly by those who gained nobility through service to the Crown or through purchase of landed wealth. Following the pattern of some kind of emergence of new landed nobility we spoke of in the context of the English Revolution, in the rest of Europe too this new nobility asserted its privileges

both against the monarchy and against the people and the middle classes. Thus the arena of politics at the level of the country or nation-state lay chiefly in the conflicts between the monarchies and the aristocracies, now broader in composition and united against the monarchies. The monarchies, with the development of trade and commerce, the requirements of centralized armies and bureaucracy required funds at their disposal, while the stakes of the aristocracies lay in preserving their privileges, most notably their privileges regarding exemption from taxation and what they gained from their dominance over the rural economy and the peasantry.

At an intermediate level, the commercial classes were gaining importance in most of the European states, especially in Western Europe. It was in their interest to end some of the privileges enjoyed by the landed aristocracies, particularly in the matter of taxation and appointments in high services, and also that national policies be directed in favour of commerce and trade.

Conflict and accommodation, initiating changes in the administration of the States and in the composition of representative institutions, was thus an important aspect of the politics of the period. Changes that took place in this arena were decisive also for the majority of the people whom they impacted but who were unable to participate at this level of politics. Franchise remained very restricted, based on property qualifications, and women had no vote at any level, even those belonging to the aristocracy.

People's voices and concerns were expressed through actions outside the dominant arenas of parliaments and provincial assembles. This period saw Luddite proto class actions of an emerging proletariat towards the end of this period in England, and almost everywhere food riots or peasant protests, or flight of the peasantry in areas of serfdom. They lent a radical element to the politics of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Religion still held an important place in the lives of people. This had some implications regarding the nature of popular protests and their attitudes to the monarchs. In the struggle between the monarchies and the Church, it was the monarchies that had won out, but the Church everywhere, of whatever variety supported by the Monarch, continued to enjoy privileges as an institution, and in return it supported the monarchies against any substantial social and political challenges.

Politics of this long period can be roughly divided into two phases – the mid seventeenth to early eighteenth century and the rest of the eighteenth century before the French Revolution – when many of the developments occurred that explain the revolutionary impact of the French Revolution. The pace of change is much greater in the second phase, mainly the 1750s and 1760s, the two decades preceding the French revolution. The first phase is dominated by dynastic and colonial wars, the second by political and social developments *within* States, throughout Europe. However, till the end of this period, monarchy remained the form of state structure throughout, a constitutional monarchy in England, stronger monarchies on the Continent, and an autocracy in the Russian Empire.

The gap in economic and scientific developments between Europe and the rest of the world emerged in a stark form during this period, especially during the second phase. The development of capitalism in Western Europe led to

institutional changes linked with the structures of the States, and the nature of intellectual debates also influenced how these institutional changes were effected in the different States.

International relations began to take a modern shape, in the sense that we know it. The dominant powers in the first phase were England, Spain, France, Holland, Portugal. By the second phase only England and France retained this position, and to these were added Prussia, Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. There were three aspects to international relations during this period: the consolidation of the power of European countries over the rest of the world; competition amongst themselves for the rest of the world, i.e., to establish and take control of colonies; to aim for some kind of a balance of power in Europe.

8.3 POLITICS AND STATE: MONARCHIES AND PRIVILEGED CLASSES

Throughout Europe, this period saw a further consolidation of the monarchies, the strengthening of centralized bureaucracies and armies at the disposal of the monarchs. These also became the arenas for the conflicts and accommodations between the monarchies and the aristocracies throughout Europe, primarily because they impinged on areas of control over resources and taxation and privilege. As mentioned above, throughout this period, political power was the preserve of the monarchies and the aristocracies, and to a large extent dominated by the conflict between them.

Except for England, this was a period of absolute monarchies. Only some Italian states, Netherlands, and the German states remained outside the ambit of powerful monarchies, although they were also ruled in the same fashion in their smaller territorial units. Power rather than welfare or concern for their subjects characterized rule all over Europe. The institution of monarchy was rarely questioned, the debates being mainly over the nature and distribution of power between the king and society, society meaning in turn the privileged classes. What gave power to the monarchies was their need and their success in building centralized standing armies, and in order to sustain them, a reorganization of finances, taxation, administration and judicial system.

Some historians have called this period as the century of France. The French monarchy, during the 17th and 18th centuries, not only became a model for the institution of monarchy in Europe, within France it reached a stage where Louis XIV was able to rightfully claim "I am the State" and there was no challenge to this assertion. He and the Ministers appointed by him "decided all the important matters of government", and the great nobles could no longer build their power solely on basis of birth and were dependent on the King to bestow them their positions. The King, however, claimed his position to be both God given and rational, and said he was bound to rule for the good of his people. How he defined this good was, of course, his prerogative, and these became the duties of the monarch. Although control over administration, especially in the provinces, was still exercised by provincial estates dominated by the aristocracy, and mayors and town councils had extensive rights, the trend was towards centralization of administration, strict economic regulation, a uniform legal system, with the King as the final authority for nomination of mayors, appointment of royal officials called *intendants* in the provinces and the army commanders. The Ministers in

succession, Richlieu, Mazarin and Colbert were instrumental in increasing royal authority and making it the norm. The mercantilist policies created a financial basis for the French monarchy that survived almost till the eve of the Revolution, leading to bankruptcy only in the final decade prior to it during the reign of Louis XVI. Four fifths of the taxes collected reached the royal treasury, and although the nobility and the Church remained exempt, many taxes now fell on the common people, including the bourgeoisie. Despite the tiers of administrative and judicial institutions from the gubernias (provinces) to lower levels, there was no single central parliament that checked or challenged royal authority. Moreover, there was a system of patronage from top to bottom where ecclesiastical positions, offices and titles were awarded by the King, a prerogative central to 18th century politics, which ensured loyalty to the dynasty rather than an abstract nation.

On the other side, in practice, the *parlements* continued to assert their independence, particularly the important Paris *parlement*. Also, the King had to deal with the *Fronde* and other smaller revolts in the mid-17th century, and with assertions based on local diversities across the country. And the King had to accept limitations of some laws, rationality, propriety and wisdom in exercising power, and with time to respect, more and more, the right to and sanctity of private property.

Thus there was a conflict between the customary practice of offices that were bought and inherited, and between those the King appointed. The King on his part had to be careful, in the reorganization of finances and administration, and not to impinge on these privileges to a point that would tear asunder the entire fabric of privilege-based society. This contradiction grew and marked the decades prior to the French Revolution. Especially as the bourgeoisie that grew with the encouragement to manufacture, trade and monopolies, aimed for adequate representation in a system that formally divided the social and political structure into the Three Orders: the Nobility, the Church and Commoners, with the bourgeoisie being held back due to the privileges to the other two Orders, even though some financial reforms were attempted by the King. The King who had not called the Estates General, the representative body of the Three Estates since 1614, was forced to reconvene it in 1788, with momentous consequences that proved to be the proverbial starting point of the process that was to end in Revolution.

In England, the highest aristocracy, of birth, was few in numbers, in proportion to the population, than in other countries. But the landed aristocracy, known as the new gentry had expanded due the commercialization of agriculture and this section was very much entrenched in the parliament. After the Stuarts and the Glorious Revolution, the Hanoverian dynasty that followed did not have strong rulers in George I and George II. Therefore, England, unlike the Continent, continued to have a constitutional monarchy. The King was still very much important and he made the top appointments of Ministers, but these Ministers in the Cabinet were responsible and accountable to the Parliament. The Ministers chosen were also necessarily members of the Parliament, House of Lords or House of Commons. So the conflict between the King and parliament continued during the late 17th and first half of the 18th century, the members of Parliament were already getting organized into defined political groups, and the Whigs, who stood for limitations of the power of the King, dominated the political scene.

The franchise was still narrow, so it was the landed classes who still held sway, with the conflict between king and Parliament being a struggle between the King and aristocracy essentially, but unlike the Continent not so much geared to preserving privileges as of birth as right to property and dominance in the political and administrative edifice, and in influencing state policy in the interests of commercial agriculture and by mid-18th century the agrarian enclosures. The House of Commons became an important forum of debate and influence. The franchise even for the House of Commons was so restricted that in some boroughs only a few thousand could vote, in some the numbers reached just double numbers. However, the significance of the debates and tussles over policies was far greater then the numbers involved, its stakes being obvious from the consolidation of British rule in India and the dominance over the American colonies already being challenged in the latter half of the 18th century.

For England the politics of the 18th century involved around a unity among all privileged sections over empire building, which enriched the national exchequer, and conflicts over the exercise of authority within the Parliament (in addition to Parliament vs the King) regarding how these interests were best served.

When George III came to the throne in 1760, the aggressive trade policies and the issues of free trade and the dissatisfactions in the American colonies became new factors of conflict. George III, despite asserting authority, was subject to the legislation in Parliament. The Parliament, on its part spoke more and more in the name of the people and the nation, even as it in reality represented the interests of the now emerging commercial and manufacturing bourgeoisie in addition to the landed gentry. The voice for change was reflected in Parliament, as also the defense of *status quo*, and by the eve of the French Revolution these voices reflected new vocabulary if not radical change. The outbreak of the Revolution set into momentum both a process of radicalism and conservatism, contrary to the earlier studies that gave the impression of England being completely shielded from the effects of the revolutionary ideas reverberating through Europe. This gave a new dimension to politics in England, particularly as the bourgeoisie had become important factor in advocating policies.

In Central and Eastern Europe, where the aristocracies acquired power late, not through the long medieval period, the monarchies were absolute in nature. Among these were **Brandenberg-Prussia**, the **Austria-Habsburg Empire** and **Russia**. There is a strong link between the absolute rule and the emergence of serfdom. Here, the landed aristocracy, in return for the state creation and safeguard of the institution of serfdom on which they depended for their incomes, became much more dependent on the monarchs than in Western Europe. They became the officers of the army and the civil servants, working in the state structure while their estates were run along feudal lines. Some of them carried out measures such as centralization of administration, standardization of weights and measures, subordination of the Church to the State, encouragement to technology and manufacture, centralized armies etc, which had more to do with modernization and efficiency and control over the feudal landed aristocracy, than enlightened thought on the part of the rulers. They also brought some changes in law and administration envisaged in enlightenment thought, but only those that served their pragmatic cause of a strengthened centralized states.

Contrary to Western Europe, therefore, in these regions absolutism rose on the basis of an economy based on serfdom, which tied the monarchies and the landed

aristocracy in a bond in which the administrative system and military strength and the existing social fabric of privilege was predicated on a strong monarchy. It was only in the late 18th century in Prussia (under Frederick the Great) and Austria (under Philip II), and mid-19th century in the Russian Empire (under Alexander II), that serfdom was abolished and peasants emancipated: owing to the fact that with changes in economy it no longer remained viable and emancipation in these countries was effected in ways that the landed aristocracy benefited, thus maintaining the pact between the monarchies and the aristocracy, with the monarchies still retaining more power than in western Europe. *The reformed codes of law still reinforced and maintained a distinction between the privileged and the commoner.* We have to, therefore, understand how limited is the applicability of the concept of 'enlightened' or 'benevolent' despotism with regard to these rulers.

The kings of **Prussia** in fact acquired their royal title only in 1701, but came to command a territory where the centralized military and administration controlled by Frederick I and then Frederick the Great played the most decisive role. Concerned about education at the lower levels and despite codification of law and preparation of the Code of Civil Procedure in 1781, and some degree of religious toleration, and some empathy for enlightenment ideas, 18th century Prussian monarchy was geared towards creating a strong state rather than a just one: the pact between the monarchy and the Junkers (landed aristocracy), reflected in the increasing roles for them in the high appointments while soldiers were recruited from the peasantry, ensured a strong militarized state, in which the conflict between the landed ruling classes and monarchy was minimal because both sides recognized the necessity of the pact.

It was primarily loyalty to the ruling Habsburg dynasty that held together the multi-national **Austrian Habsburg Empire**, which during the 18th century had enriched its territories in relation to the Ottoman Empire, Poland and Hungarian region. The reigns of Maria Teresa and Joseph II, which encompass our period, were in conformity with the general features of the reforming enlightenment despotism we have referred to above. One can talk here too of the codification of laws, administrative reform and abolition of some harsh punishments. But the state and politics revolved around the privileges ensured to the landed aristocracy through the intensification of serfdom.

In **Russia**, under Peter the Great and Catherine, the process of "westernization" and technological borrowings coupled with intensification of serfdom, greatly influenced the way Autocracy developed and also the forms that political opposition took for the next three centuries. The consolidation of the Autocracy was achieved through these processes whereby, in return for the privilege of serfdom guaranteed by the Tsar, the landowners were transformed into service nobility. Their status henceforth depended not so much on lineage as on the rankings achieved in administration or the military. So, while there could be some social mobility based on talent, the subservience of the aristocracy to the Autocracy was a feature until well into the early 19th century.

Poland, on the other hand, remained an "aristocratic republic", dominated by the wealthiest noble families, ultimately divided and partitioned among Austria, Russia and Prussia. **Sweden**, as a result of the vicissitudes of conflicts with the aristocracy, was an absolute monarchy and sometimes tended towards a kind of Parliament, still dominated by the aristocracy. It was the same with **Netherlands**, particularly the urbanized areas of Holland.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Briefly discuss the nature of state and politics in England and France in the eighteenth century.

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2) Analyse the relationship between State and aristocracies with reference to Prussia and Russia in eighteenth century.

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8.4 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: THE CONTINENT AND EMPIRES

Trade, strategic advantage and glory were primary motives for conflict between the European powers. Armed conflicts, diplomacy and treaties were, therefore, the chief elements of politics between the different European states during this period.

The distinctive feature of the international relations was the fear of French hegemony in the west and the rise of Russia in the east. The entry of Russia as a power player in Europe since the reign of Peter the Great had enormous consequences for Europe, as did Prussia among the German states. For the first time there was a concern with maintaining some kind of a 'balance of power': on the Continent and across the world among themselves. On the Continent, France found its interests in conflict with the growing Austrian Habsburg Empire and with the Dutch, and entered into wars with them. The Turks had still not given up their ambitions for an Empire and they too came into conflict primarily with the Austrian Empire, though by the end of the 18th century they lost out. By the 18th century, through conquests of the Baltic provinces, Russia achieved her aim of access to a coastline and the sea ports.

The important wars of the early 18th century were the Spanish Succession War, the Hungarian War and the Northern War, followed by the Austrian Succession War. As explained earlier, due to the prevalence of monarchies and alliances through marriages, issues of succession often caused ripples in countries other than where succession was to take place and had consequences for the balance of power across countries. Many of the old settlements, arrived at by the end of the Thirty Years War, were replaced with new treaties that took into account the new balance of power and the later conquests and change of boundaries.

By the beginning of the 18th century new treaties were being signed: the treaties of Utrecht, Rastadt and baden (1713-14), which marked the new balance arrived at in the west, in the process settling the conflicts and wars in the western region; the treaties of Nystad, Stockholm and Frederiksborg (1719-21), that took care of the new power equations in the north; and the treaties of Karlowitz (1699) and Passarowitz that settled the equations between Austrian Empire and Turkey in south-east Europe. Some territories changed hands through these, but they are more significant for the new power relationships they occasioned. In addition, the western European states essentially turned their attention to building overseas empires (England, France, Spain, Portugal, and Holland). The Spanish Empire by 1740 encompassed most of South America, some Caribbean islands and more. The Portuguese had a few ports in India, bits in West and East Africa, parts of Brazil and Uruguay. The Dutch had trading interests in India, but more control in Ceylon and Malacca. The French in North America and bits in India, and England of course in India, America and many other parts of the world.

England became the leading colonial and commercial power, Austria increased both power and dominion in central Europe at the expense of Turkey. Spain retained an empire but lost out in terms of influence in Europe, while Prussia despite no colonial possessions became significant on the Continent, poised for the future role it would play in German unification in the next century. Russia consolidated its Central Asian territories, with almost a colonial relationship over vast lands on the landmass. France alone retained its political supremacy over the Continent and also its overseas possessions in this period.

8.5 STATE AND CHURCH

In a society where the world-view of the majority was shaped by religion, the rulers, in keeping with their individual predilections, showed more or less religious tolerance with regard to personal beliefs of people. The number of clergy, nuns and monks, however, did not decline. But the end of the religious wars did not imply neutrality or liberalism towards religious groups; and relations with the Church and with minority religious groups were significant aspects of late 17th and 18th century European politics.

There is no doubt that alliances with the established churches of their country helped them maintain social *status quo* as well as royal authority. But in the period we are speaking of here, the relationship was not of alliances among equals: the monarchies had by the late 17th century considerably reduced the ecclesiastical autonomy that the Church held, and its power in state affairs was severely curtailed. However, it remained a significant force in the Absolutist Catholic States because it enjoyed exemption from taxation, owned lands and had serfs, or could levy its own taxes. But even in these states the higher ecclesiastical offices were made and held at the pleasure of the kings, and the papacy in Rome was forced to accept the reality of national churches across Europe. The kings and princes themselves showed little regard for Papal authority. The churches continued to exercise their traditional religious and social functions, but as arms of the state.

In **France**, the Catholic Church held lands from which it derived income, and a tax called *tithe* was levied on all commoners, which became a major grievance to the peasantry. The Church was thus very much a pillar of the Old Regime in

France. In **England** the Protestant Church could not levy any taxes, but increasingly the Kings found it difficult to support other religious sects. In **Spain**, the Inquisition and all that it entailed was put firmly in the past. In **Russia** the Autocracy brought the Orthodox ancient church under its control and made it an arm of Russification and Autocracy, and in **Austria**, the church held considerable lands, though Joseph II and Catherine, confiscated monastic lands and brought them under state control. The Church was everywhere also tied up socially with the aristocracy: most of the higher positions were held by members of the aristocracy, which further facilitated the political stance of the Church in favour of the monarchies.

But within the Church, while the higher functionaries were from the aristocracy and lived luxurious lives, the majority of the common priests and nuns were commoners and even poor. This created a complexity that had great significance for politics in the next century. Especially since so much of the educational enterprise was in the hands of the Church. The poor, the teachers among them, and the privileged behaved and exercised authority in different ways.

8.6 CHALLENGES TO THE ESTABLISHED AUTHORITY: 1760s AND 70s

Challenges to the established authority in the different states of Europe were bound to mount over this long period, given the social and economic changes and the intellectual advances linked with Enlightenment thought. These challenges were directed at the monarchies and the privileges of the landed aristocracies embedded in the State structures across Europe. These challenges accelerated the pace of politics and also added new dimensions, visible from the second decade of the 18th century until the outbreak of the French Revolution.

England had already experienced intense political debates, growth of newspapers and pamphlets during the English Revolution. The Enlightenment brought the culture into the entire continent: salons, pamphlets, newspapers, books, literary and philosophical societies, had transformed the intellectual ambience and climate in which the educated sections moved. Lawyers, government functionaries, and professionals were not unaffected by the debates engendered by the philosophes. The monarchies could not continue as before, safeguarding the world of privilege alone. In addition, the social and economic changes that came with trade and colonial empires, also made it incumbent for the monarchies to accommodate and balance larger interests.

Moreover, the State now directly impinged on the large masses of population: taxation, recruitment in armies, burden of privileges of the landed aristocracy now springing into consciousness, the bureaucracy and administrative machinery at the local level, all created discontents that found expression in various forms of popular protests. Therefore, at one level were the series of demands for political reforms to break the stranglehold of privilege; at another level were a series of popular uprisings throughout Europe.

In **England**, the thrust towards empire building and commercial profit defined British interests far more broadly than the interests of the landowning aristocracy. Its reflection in the political sphere were demands for this to get reflected in the Parliament, through a redrawing of constituencies and reforms that would allow

greater representation to towns and cities (particularly London), a larger electoral base by bringing down the property qualification for franchise, doing away with pocket boroughs and decreasing seats in the countryside with less population but more seats controlled by the aristocracy. In the 1760s and 70s words like liberty found their way into parliamentary speeches and with the unrest in the American colonies there was talk of "no taxation without representation", and a society of Supporters of Bill of Rights was formed.

In **France** the layers of privilege that had built up due to Court patronage and appointments clashed with those who had obtained wealth and education and were professionals, but were debarred from the privileges of the nobility, due simply to the fact that they did not belong to the First Order. On the other hand, the efforts to broaden the social base for the Monarchy and to finance wars and administration and the costs of extravagant Court expenditure, through initiating financial reforms and extending taxation, were deeply resented by the *Parlements* dominated by the landed aristocracy. This trend towards political isolation and crisis of the Monarchy in France was the hallmark of the politics of the decades preceding the French Revolution.

A movement for reform emerged in Denmark pressing for greater consultation with the parliament and the Estates, forced reforms from Maria Theresa and Joseph II in Bohemia and Moravia, in Sweden there was a tussle where the King managed to impose a new Constitution in 1772 after reducing the power of the Senate and the Diet, in the Dutch Republic there were demands for parliamentary reforms and federalism taking into account the cities' rights, within the Austrian empire, especially the areas incorporated from Netherlands, there were demands for transformation of the Estates general into a representative assembly. The Greeks rose against Turkish domination, and there was unrest in some Italian states and in the island of Corsica. The Austrian Empire, in particular, being multinational and multilingual saw discontent in its various parts. The German states and Prussia, being more authoritarian, too felt the pressures of reform in their absolutist regimes. These were all demands for reforms that represented the interests of the more liberal emerging forces in Europe that spoke in the name of the people. Meanwhile challenges came from the people themselves that were different in form and content.

8.7 THE POPULAR CHALLENGE: FORM, NATURE AND CONTENT

There was a further type of conflict within the state, which also assumed a greater momentum in the latter part of the century. While they were harnessed into some of the movements mentioned above, notably Wilkes in London and the *Parlements* in France, for the most part they were independent, local in character and focused on their own discontents of livelihood.

They set a trend that made them a significant factor in the equations of power in the following century. They also assumed a variety of forms, raising a variety of demands that increasingly became difficult for the state to ignore. Eastern and Central Europe, where the peasants were still bound by serfdom, and were subservient to the landed aristocracy in specific relationships, saw continuous and violent peasant uprisings. For example, in Russia, there were 73 uprisings in 1762-79 alone. Throughout this decade in this part of the world they were directed

mainly against the landlords or officials, over feudal obligations, labour services, taxes, recruitment for the army, against prices, poverty and hunger: often, considering the Tsar or the King on their side, presuming he was their guardian but did not know what was happening. Most well-known is the Pugachev rebellion, which the state and the landed aristocracy could never forget, and the memory of which terrified them well into the next century. Rebellions occurred in Austria, Bohemia, and later in France and Germany with the outbreak of the French Revolution, and in England against the Enclosure Acts, and in Sweden and Norway in the 1780s.

Workers' discontent was fuelled by low wages and introduction of machinery creating unemployment: it took the form of strikes by artisans, destruction of machinery (for example the Luddite strikes in England), often leading to riots and violence with specific targets: tailors, miners, weavers, bookbinders, printers, in various places in England and France. Another widespread occurrence was food riots, in both urban and rural areas, caused by food shortages or high prices: in England, between 1735 and 1800, there were about 175 such riots, in France between 1724 and 1789, more than a hundred. In the urban riots it was possible to discern some rudimentary political meanings.

In general, the popular challenge was more political in its consequences than in its articulation: the riots and rebellions tended to be socially conservative, local and linked to everyday life experiences, with little vision beyond the redressal of immediate grievances. Their significance lay in the fact that established authority could not take their allegiance for granted once demand for change engulfed entire societies in Europe.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Discuss the relationship between State and Church in the Seventeenth century and second half of eighteenth century.

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2) Describe the various forms of political challenge posed by people against the ruling classes in the Seventeenth century and second half of eighteenth century.

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8.8 LET US SUM UP

The late 17th and the 18th century was an important period in the history of Europe and cannot just be regarded as a prelude to the Industrial and the French Revolutions, although many of the elements that went into creating these two momentous developments emerged and grew during this period. This period had its own distinctive features, marked by the rule of monarchies and of privilege. The monarchies and the landed aristocracies played the pivotal role in politics throughout Europe. Centralized armies and bureaucracies were significant factors in the governance and politics of the 18th century. A special characteristic of this period was the symbiotic relationship between empire building and politics on the Continent.

There were distinctions between Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe, although the major forces of governance belonged to the same classes. England was the only country where parliament and constitutional norms enjoyed some prerogatives. Serfdom provided the social basis of governance and politics only in central and Eastern Europe, while Western Europe was an example of how the landed aristocracy remained a significant player in politics despite the decline of feudalism and the emergence of capitalistic features in economy and a rising commercial bourgeoisie.

Enlightened despotism, as we discussed, did not give a better deal to the peasantry and common people, although it led to reform in some laws. A new political discourse emerged, with the spread of Enlightenment thought among the educated, and popular revolts of the last decades created the conditions whereby "popular allegiance could pass exclusively to the nation" – as opposed to the King. It took the French Revolution to actually achieve this in practice.

8.9 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) See Section 8.2

2) See Section 8.3

Check Your Progress 2

1) See Section 8.5

2) See Section 8.6 and 8.7

UNIT 9 ENLIGHTENMENT*

Structure

9.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- learn about what is known as the Enlightenment, particularly in European context;
- explain about its predecessors;
- know about the various stages through which it evolved;
- chart out its important ideas; and
- learn about some of the important Enlightenment thinkers.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Enlightenment was one of the greatest intellectual movements in human history. Along with the Renaissance and the Reformation, it is considered to have provided the intellectual foundations of modernity. In fact, it is supposed to have contributed to the making of the modern world far more than any other movement that preceded it. It still is regarded as the epoch since when the modern world began, at least in terms of thought. It is generally considered that Enlightenment began in Western Europe from where it spread to other parts of Europe, then to North America and South America. Finally, during the nineteenth century, in the course of European incursions in all parts of the world, Enlightenment ideas made their mark throughout the world. In this Unit, we will discuss the Enlightenment only in its European context.

* Resource Person : Prof. S. B. Upadhyay

9.2 THE MEANING OF ENLIGHTENMENT

To the question 'What is Enlightenment?' the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) responded: 'Dare to know! Have the courage to make use of your own understanding'. This response put emphasis on the individual, on critical thinking, and a rejection of the traditionally imposed way of thinking whether by religion or any other overarching authority. Kant's response was in keeping with the strong intellectual current during his time which stressed intellectual freedom and the use of Reason for seeking knowledge and progress. The Enlightenment thinkers, including Kant, wanted their ideas to reach to a wider audience which should consist of autonomous individuals with independent thinking. They, therefore, emphasized on wider education moving beyond the confines of formal schooling which, in many cases, was managed by religious institutions. In their opinion, a wider and broadly secular education would make the people capable of applying critical enquiry in their lives.

And yet the notion of the intellectual freedom was limited to educated and rational persons, mostly belonging to the upper and middle classes. The democratic reach of the Enlightenment did not encompass the masses, or even women. Many of the Enlightenment thinkers believed that it was dangerous for masses to take their own decisions. The same applied to most non-European peoples also. However, the Enlightenment thinkers thought that the masses, women, and the non-European people could benefit from the use of reason if they were properly guided.

Peter Gay, one of the important historians of Enlightenment, characterised it as the 'rise of modern paganism'. This was in view of the anti-Church pronouncements of many thinkers particularly during French Enlightenment. However, many historians have now contended that such a characterisation cannot be applied because Enlightenment cultures in most other countries, including Italy, Germany, Austria, Scotland, America and England, were not anti-Christianity. Even in France, only in limited cases could anti-Christian or anti-religious stance could be discerned. It is true that there was a general thrust against superstition and restrictive institutional forms of religion, and the wealth, power and corruption of the clergy was denounced. But the religion as such was not rejected, and there was a wide spectrum of attitudes towards religion. At the same time, there was a more general insistence on separating the civil from the sacred or the religion from the state. This attitude led in the direction of secularization of politics where institutional religions were supposed to play no role. Moreover, the material development was considered a more desirable goal and a better arena for human activity than search for the divine.

On the basis of the writings in recent decades, it is difficult to offer a precise definition of Enlightenment. The most we can attempt is to broadly describe it. On this ground, we can say that the Enlightenment was an intellectual movement in Europe during the eighteenth century. Its centre was France, but other European countries were also significantly involved in evolving their own versions of Enlightenment. The most common factor in all these different versions was the rejection of traditional and religious dogma with an appeal to reason and emphasis on the individual.

9.3 THE BACKGROUND

Enlightenment did not originate in intellectual vacuum. The development of modern science since the sixteenth century and of the modern philosophy during the seventeenth century had a lot of influence on the Enlightenment. The emphasis on observation, experimentation, analysis, and reasoning – which were at the root of the modern science – was picked up by Enlightenment thinkers in their fight against traditional and religious modes of thinking. Rene Descartes (rationalist philosophy), Isaac Newton (modern science), John Locke (liberal philosophy), and Pierre Bayle (scepticism) were among the most important influences. They were among the most important philosophers to have introduced the new scientific method in thinking about society. Some historians even consider Locke and Bayle as part of early Enlightenment.

Newton (1640-1726) had tried to combine the rationalist philosophy of Descartes with the experimental method of Francis Bacon. Voltaire, who was among the most important Enlightenment thinkers, particularly praised him for his scientific and philosophical achievements. Apart from his famous scientific discovering about gravitation and laws of motion, it was Newton's philosophical thesis about the nature of universe which most appealed to the Enlightenment thinkers. Newton visualized universe as a self-propelling machine which did not need God's intervention for its day-to-day functioning. It was originally set in motion by the God, who then withdrew and let the machine function on its own.

According to John Locke's (1632-1704), the 'scientific method' could be usefully employed for studying the society and humanity as much as it was applicable to the study of nature. He believed that at birth the mind of every human individual was a *tabula rasa* or blank slate on which it was possible to imprint any ideas. On empiricist lines, Locke believed that all knowledge derived from sensory perceptions and there were no inherited traits. This allowed for the possibility of posing an innate equality in society. He also rejected the crucial idea held by the Catholic Church that the humankind was burdened with the original sin. Locke advocated individual liberty, religious tolerance, separation of political powers, educational reforms and freedom of press.

Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) was a thorough-going sceptic who doubted almost all religions and moral philosophies that prevailed since ancient time. His ideas were quite suitable for Enlightenment which was grounded in doubt towards traditional authority, including that of Church. Since all systems could be doubted, Bayle advocated mutual tolerance, particularly in the field of religion.

Besides Scientific Revolution, the swift and momentous changes in the sphere of religion since the sixteenth century also created an atmosphere of opinion in which the established ideas were questioned, though still within religious garb. The proliferation of dissenting religious sects questioning and criticizing other religious ideas generated a spirit of enquiry. Scepticism emerged as a general spirit in the seventeenth century. Numerous sects and their distinctive ideologies and practices brought in the poor and labouring classes also within their ambits. Continued questioning and scepticism gave rise to a situation in which the role of organized religions in the lives of people increasingly became less. This laid the ground for the acceptance of non-Church and generally secular stance of the Enlightenment. People who were already losing interest in organized religions were receptive to the ideas of Enlightenment thinkers.

The foundations of the Enlightenment were laid not only in sphere of ideas but also in economic and social changes. The spread of print culture, creation of a new public sphere beyond the control of the Church and the government, and growth in the number of merchant and commercial classes and the bourgeoisie in general provided the basis for the spread of Enlightenment ideas. As institutions of social and intellectual interaction, salons and coffee houses provided active spaces. While the salons were operated mostly by upper-class ladies, the coffee houses were truly public institutions. Since the late seventeenth century, the coffee houses grew significantly in many European cities. As an institution of public interaction, coffee houses were less high-brow than salons and less mass-oriented than the taverns. They emerged and spread as truly middle-class institutions providing spaces for polite and orderly socializing and intellectual discussion. They acted as bases for creation and dissemination of ideas which were crucial for Enlightenment culture.

One of the most important phenomena which shaped the contours of Enlightenment was the colonization of non-European countries by the Europeans. The load of knowledge gathered from the colonial countries weighed quite heavily on Enlightenment thought. Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Raynal, Robertson and many other Enlightenment thinkers derived heavily from colonial sources to build their theories or develop their critique. Rousseau also famously modelled his image of the 'noble savage' on the native American version. India and China played important role in Voltaire's critique of pre-modern European states and religions. Received colonial knowledge of Asia served Montesquieu greatly in developing his theories on the determining role of climate and geography. Robertson relied heavily on non-European knowledge to develop his idea of stage-wise development of human society.

9.4 STAGES

Although the Enlightenment was initially anchored in France, particularly in Paris, it quickly spread across much of Europe, including the German states, the Dutch Republic, Britain, Italy, and North America. The Enlightenment ideas also reached to Eastern Europe, particularly Russia and Poland, and to the Balkan countries. The reception of French ideas took different forms in different countries. For example, in Italy it provided opportunities for the anti-Church thinkers to attack clerical and papal intervention in politics, while in Britain it gave rise to a distinctive form of 'Scottish Enlightenment'.

The initial sources of diffusion of Enlightenment ideas were the Parisian salons and coffee houses. These became the hotbeds of ideas and opinions about society, politics, government, education, and nature. It was here that most French intellectuals and many intellectuals from other European countries gathered to informally discuss and deliberate their ideas. And it was from here that these ideas were carried to other parts of France and to other European countries, even to America. The wide spread of Enlightenment ideas, though mostly within Europe, resulted in the creation of a trans-border community referred to as the 'republic of letters'. It was an informal international community of public intellectuals engaged in spread of new knowledge and the new ways of thinking.

There were three main stages through which the Enlightenment evolved, particularly in Western Europe. The first phase may be said to be during the first

half of the eighteenth century, and this phase was directly influenced by the ideas of the preceding modern scientific advancement, also known as the 'Scientific Revolution' which introduced radical changes in the intellectual atmosphere of Western Europe. It was natural that the emerging Enlightenment would derive many of its early ideas from this momentous intellectual change.

The second phase, known as high Enlightenment, began with the important works of some most famous Enlightenment thinkers such as Montesquieu and Voltaire. Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Laws* (1748) may be said to have heralded this new phase which can be said to end by 1778 when the three great French thinkers of the period – Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau – were dead.

The third phase, also called late Enlightenment, marked 'a shift from an emphasis on human reason to a greater preoccupation with the emotions and passions of mankind' [Merriman, 2010: 313]. In this period, there were several monarchs who adopted certain ideas of Enlightenment and applied them in their respective domains. This period also witnessed a wider dissemination of these ideas among common people resulting in undermining of the higher authority, particularly in France. This process ultimately led to the growth of revolutionary ideas in France and elsewhere. One of the distinctive features of this phase was a shift from emphasis on reason to one on emotions, as earlier exemplified in Rousseau. Another important trend was the emphasis on the idea of freedom on the working of the economies as advocated by Adam Smith. The shift from mercantilism (with emphasis on gold and silver and protectionist economic policies) to economic liberalism (advocating free international trade) occurred in this period. During this stage, there was also emphasis on the distinctive national cultures and national identities. This phase also witnessed the increasing involvement of the common people in the adaptation of the Enlightenment ideas with new meanings, particularly radical anti-establishment stance.

Another important development of the late Enlightenment was the growth of German idealist philosophy, beginning with Kant, which stipulated that reason and sensory perceptions were not the only source of our knowledge of the world. Instead, it laid emphasis on the primacy of ideas as the basis of knowledge. The world could only be understood through the medium of concept generated from each person's own experiences. This led away from the High Enlightenment's belief in universality of ideas and a rational objectivity overriding individual experiences and beliefs.

9.5 MAIN IDEAS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The ideas of Enlightenment proved to be so potent and so applicable to the emerging modern world that Enlightenment became one of the greatest intellectual milestones in the history of humanity. The modern world became so closely identified with Enlightenment that it is also referred to as post-Enlightenment world in intellectual terms. These ideas encompassed long-ranging views on nature, human world, society, economy, state, international relations, and human freedom.

In the Western world, the Enlightenment thinkers questioned the centuries-old thinking generated and rooted by Christianity and other traditional forms of thought. Thus, the *philosophes* (as the French Enlightenment thinkers were also

called) pushed for secularization at all levels of politics and society and challenged the established authority of the Churches. They emphasized on individual thinking on rational lines and questioned the traditional ideas and practices passed on from generation to generation without any thinking. At another level, they attacked the institution of slavery widely established by the Europeans in the Americas and elsewhere.

However, although very critical of organized religions, particularly Catholicism, the Enlightenment thinkers were not anti-religion. Excepting a few, such as d'Holbach (1723-1789) and Claude Helvetius (1715-1771), most Enlightenment thinkers believed in the existence of God. However, their God was reasonable and non-interfering. Many of the Enlightenment thinkers believed in deism which meant that the creator of the universe was God but who did not interfere in the working of universe or human society. Deism combined reason and belief in a happy mixture. It was possible for the deists to analyse the nature and human society in rational and scientific terms while at the same time keeping their faith in the original Creator (God) intact.

Scepticism towards, even rejection of, the traditional authority was the hallmark of Enlightenment. Universal reason, which was regarded as the way to understand the world, was supposed to be applied by each individual. It was the belief that all human beings were innately good and reasonable. It was possible to fully comprehend the world if proper scientific analysis was applied. There could be continuous development and progress if suitable use was made of reason and science.

Some of the Enlightenment thinkers also emphasized the popular sovereignty and the rule of law. Although many philosophers were patronized by kings and nobles, and they did not reject the institution of monarchy, they were against assumption of unbridled powers in the hands of the rulers, whether monarchs or otherwise.

In its overall thrust, Enlightenment was anti-imperialist and many of the thinkers strongly condemned the colonial rule of violence and exploitation. Some of them, such as Diderot, Raynal, Herder, and Condorcet very strongly denounced the European greed, arrogance, violence and rapacious behaviour in colonial territories.

The Enlightenment thinkers were against the arbitrary nature of authority of their times and advocated rule of law and emphasized on cultivating virtues among the rulers. However, they believed in popular sovereignty but not in democracy or power to people. For them, freedom consisted in 'obedience only to the legal actions of legally constituted authorities' [Black, 1990: 214]. Equality was qualified as equality before law not in social or economic terms. They considered property as individual right, and the division of society into various orders was regarded as natural.

The primacy of reason, rejection of dogmatic thinking, emphasis on individual thinking, idea of progress, superiority of the modern world as against the pre-modern one, the belief that the human nature was the same everywhere and consequent universalism were the most important ideas of Enlightenment.

Although the Enlightenment thinkers propagated powerful anti-establishment ideas, it was mostly done at the intellectual level. They were not activists and

practical revolutionaries, and they did not lead revolts. They relied on pen, papers, and prints to disseminate their ideas. Their mediums of communication were 'letters, unpublished manuscripts, books, pamphlets, brochures, and … novels, poetry, drama, literary and art criticism, and political philosophy' [Merriman, 2010: 316].

Despite certain broad, common stand in favour of rational and secular thought, the Enlightenment thinkers differed from each other in quite significant ways. Thus, Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau were deists who believed that the God existed as the prime mover of the natural machine. After setting into motion the huge machine of nature and its basic laws, however, the God withdrew and did not interfere in the everyday life of humanity. Thus, after initiating the laws of nature and human world, the God left the humans alone to work out their actions and routes of progress. On the other hand, Diderot, Holbach and Helvetius were atheists. Even during what has been categorized as 'late Enlightenment' we find a variety of responses from intellectuals generally associated with Enlightenment. Thus, while Condorcet took a radical stand on religion and political authority, Kant was rather conciliatory to these. Even the ideas and the terms used by different thinkers in different national contexts carried different meanings. Similarly, the ideas related to the Enlightenment varied in different countries and what was originally pronounced in France would not remain the same in Italy or Poland. At another level, while many Enlightenment thinkers believed in linear and continuous progress, some like David Hume supported a cyclical view of history. Rousseau thought that human society had declined in many ways rather than progressing.

However, belief in reason and critical enquiry were generally common among all the Enlightenment thinkers. The reason served as both the goal and the method of enquiry. It was believed that the reason helped in human progress by making the humans overcome their environment and the human society to dominate the nature. Reason also promoted scepticism towards any given norms and settled authority and emphasized reliance of objectivity and proper scientific analysis. The reason acted against the established authorities of the Church and the state and helped to provide a radical edge to Enlightenment. At the same time, however, it also served to demarcate a sharp distinction between the humans and animals, and to help create a regime of marginalization for those humans who were regarded as insane, mad, or lacking in the faculty to reason. Moreover, it also marked a distinction between the people and countries possessing higher rational faculties, such as the Europeans, and those with lower rationality such as the people in the colonies, the blacks, the savages, the wild people, and the slaves. Distinctions were also made between modern European people with a developed rationality and hence social and political organization, and the pre-modern people of all sorts.

In recent decades, questions have been raised about any linear development and uniform character of Enlightenment ideology. It has been argued that although Enlightenment thinkers apparently blasted against religion, it is possible to locate that their attack was mostly against the established religion, particularly Catholic Church and the priests, rather than against religion as such. There were in fact very few direct attack against Christianity. In some cases, the reason was supposed to reinforce the values and beliefs of Christianity. Reason was sometimes used even to support divine revelation and miracles. Many intellectuals of this period

'shared Locke's view that a rational appreciation of man's situation would lead people to be Christians' [Black, 1990: 210]. Still, while most of them were not anti-religious, or even anti-Christian, they were also not concerned about matters of soul. Their concerns were definitely worldly and secular.

None of the major Enlightenment thinkers, even in France where they developed a strong critique of establishment, faced any prolonged and severe penal action. Despite their many anti-establishment views, the Enlightenment thinkers were not averse to the idea of accepting favours from the contemporary monarchical rulers. Thus, Voltaire, Montesquieu and Diderot accepted membership of the French Royal Academy. They all praised the 'enlightened' monarch Frederick the Great of Prussia and Catherine of Russia. Many of the famous philosophers also earned a lot of money, besides gaining prestige. Most of them lived long life in moderate affluence. They were appreciated and even lionised in many cases. They enjoyed glory within their lifetime and they tried to convince many autocratic rulers of their times to implement their ideas on government. Despite the critical stance, most of them were reformers and not revolutionaries. Their criticism of monarchy was rather limited, and even their radical critique of the Catholic Church evoked less animosity and incurred less risk in France than it would have done in a rigidly orthodox century like Spain. On the other hand, their deism and anti-Church stance which appeared very radical in France would not have acquired similar edge in England or Holland.

Scottish Enlightenment and New Economic Thought

The term 'Scottish Enlightenment' is used for a number of thinkers from Scotland (part of Britain) who made enormous intellectual contribution to the Enlightenment. David Hume, Adam Smith, and William Robertson were among the main such Enlightenment thinkers. Among their most significant contribution to Enlightenment thought was the emphasis on political economy. Hume and Smith emphasized on commerce, manufacture and technological innovation rather than on agriculture or bullion as the best means to achieve wealth. Moreover, they envisaged a possibility of each country growing together because the commercial wealth was ever increasing. The path to become rich would be common to all, at least to all relatively developed European countries. Increasing trade and commerce would provide opportunity and incentive for the manufacturers and even landowners to invest. Adam Smith criticized the restrictive mercantilist trade practices which relied on pressure, monopolies, and control of markets. He instead favoured open commerce free from the control of the guilds and the government.

The thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment offered strong opposition to Rousseau's trenchant critique of modern society. They argued that economic life of the pre-modern society was inherently precarious, and it was only commerce and manufacture, conducted as freely as possible, that would create wealth required for the economic improvement of all countries and all classes. Such arguments proved so influential that, after Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations most thinkers and even policy-makers started considering commerce as crucial to an understanding of the modern society. Now, political economy was accepted as the most important and new science of society which would have universal application. It was one of the greatest contributions made by Enlightenment thought not only towards a knowledge of human society but also towards improving its material conditions. This vision offered prospects of great material

progress in the present world dealing a huge blow to the religious idea of freedom from misery in the next world. It made possible the secularisation of society at a much broader level than could be possible by a simple separation of religion and state. Moreover, the idea of free commerce projected a larger world beyond the boundaries of individual countries; it was truly international in scope.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Discuss the main influences on Enlightenment thought.

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2) Write a note on the important ideas of Enlightenment.

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9.6 SOME IMPORTANT ENLIGHTENMENT THINKERS

In this section we will discuss the ideas of some important French thinkers of 'High Enlightenment' whose ideas became crucial to the posterity for a long time to come.

9.6.1 Montesquieu (1689-1755)

Montesquieu, a French political and historical thinker, was among the most important Enlightenment thinkers whose famous work *The Spirit of Laws* (1748) is considered to have inaugurated the high Enlightenment. He had a strong deterministic view of human development. On the basis of his analysis of many countries, he argued the primacy of climate and geography in determining the nature of the various governments. Thus, a hot and humid climate gave rise to despotism, the temperate climate encouraged the growth of democracies in various forms, the most favoured being the constitutional monarchies. Moreover, he also argued that the size of the ruled area also made a difference. Thus, a large territory could be governed only through despotism, a monarchy is suitable for medium-sized area, while a republic could survive only in a small area. Even people were different in different regions. Thus, the people who lived in cold climates are strong, vigorous, and courageous, while those living in hot climates were weak, sensuous, and volatile. He praised the British system of constitutional government and advocated separation of powers between various organs of the state. According to him, only the rule by constitution could ensure that public order

and freedom of the individual could co-exist. He also did not believe in the divine origins and divine rights of the kings and argued that the power of the king was derived from the people and not God. Montesquieu looked up at the nobility to restrict the unbridled powers of despotic kings.

9.6.2 Voltaire (1694-1778)

Voltaire (Francois-Marie Arouet,) was the most popular Enlightenment thinker who was read very widely. He was very witty and sarcastic and attacked the Church and the priests with utmost vigour. He believed in uniform human nature and universalism. He criticized the determinism of Montesquieu. According to him, all 'civilized nations everywhere, beginning with India and ending with Europe', possessed the same truth. But he also thought that there was marked differences between a 'civilized' and a 'non-civilized' society. While the Asian and European societies were civilized, the African and pre-modern American societies were uncivilized.

Voltaire's severest attack was against the system of religion prevailing in France concentrating a lot of powers in the Church. He, however, praised Confucianism and Hinduism as containing relevant truths for humankind. He also believed that a natural religion based on reason was necessary to maintain order in the society and to give people hope. Without any such system there would be chaos and anarchy. He supported a form of toleration which was to be worldly and non-religious whereby 'the physical and moral well-being of society' would be preserved and fanaticism and dogmatism would be rejected.

He was also a great admirer of Britain praising it for its constitutional government, free press, religious tolerance, and commercial prowess. In contrast to Montesquieu, however, Voltaire favoured the centralized monarchy to protect common people from the oppression of the nobles.

9.6.3 Diderot (1713-1784)

Denis Diderot is famous for preparing the monumental *Encyclopedia* (in association with d'Alembert and initiated in 1751) which became the most familiar landmark of Enlightenment. It consisted of 60,000 articles and 2,885 illustrations making 28 volumes. It claimed to collect, organized and classify all knowledge from all over the world. Almost all the major Enlightenment thinkers in France contributed article for it. Despite its bulk and price, the *Encyclopedia* became quite popular with the middle classes and reached to almost all the countries in Europe. It provided a sharp focus to the anti-establishment stance of the Enlightenment and riled the French authorities so much that one of its volumes was banned and Diderot was jailed for some time.

Diderot worked for many years to complete this in 1765, and he himself contributed about 5,000 articles. Through his writings, he took a radical stance going against the prevailing opinion in France and the West in general. He strongly emphasized on rationality and laws of nature. Diderot criticized the oppression and exploitation of women and the system of male domination. He condemned slavery and advocated legal equality among human beings. The stand taken by Diderot and the *Encyclopedia* in general was against monarchy and in support of representative government, sometimes going as far as popular sovereignty, coming close to demanding a republic.

9.6.4 Rousseau (1712-1778)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau occupied an ambiguous place within the Enlightenment because he put equal emphasis on reason and emotions. He believed that spontaneity and instinct were as much part of human nature as rationality, order, and laws. In opposition to many others, he held that history did not represent a uniform and linear progress. He believed that the society changed from freedom to unfreedom, from relative equality to inequality, and from pastoral-agricultural setting to urbanization, growth of cities, congestion, and corruption of morals. Rousseau offered a strong critique of the modern society and its moral decline. At the economic level, he advocated a balanced growth between the rural and urban areas so that there was no unilateral transfer of massive population from the villages to the cities.

Rousseau believed the primitive societies were harmonious, non-hierarchical, simple, and therefore ideal. The modern civilization, on the other hand, was corrupt, acrimonious, mad after wealth, and non-egalitarian. In his famous book *The Social Contract* (1762), he attempted to outline how in contemporary societies, the people associate with each other for their safety and for getting justice, but still remain free individuals. In line with Hobbes and Locke, Rousseau also thought that there occurred a 'social contract' where the free-born individual surrenders his / her natural rights to the 'general will' to find a community, order, and protection. However, in contrast to his predecessors, Rousseau conceived that this surrender of rights was not to an autocratic state or to a dynastic ruler but to citizen-rulers who were equal and on the same ground with others. In contrast to some other Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire, Rousseau did not believe in the future enlightenment of the dynastic rulers. For him, sovereignty was reposed in the people and not in the kings. Moreover, there was no divine sanction of sovereignty.

9.6.5 Turgot (1727-81)

Anne Robert Jacques Turgot was a French economist who also served as Minister in the French government. He was one of the earliest and strongest proponent of the idea of progress. This progress was to be linear, completely secular, and human-oriented rather than divine. As per his universalistic thinking, the societies all over the world would follow the same path of linear and progressive development. In this sense, progress was inevitable in every society. There would be three stages of progress: from hunting to pastoral to agricultural. In the first stage, it was passion and not reason which would be supreme, and the human society would be in the savage state. This stage was not suitable for the creation of culture. In the next stage, the society got wealthier and communication increased. But, due to high mobility, people at large could not develop common bonds, and no records could be kept. Finally, with the coming of agriculture, settled life, and generation of surplus, the civilization emerged and human culture took a higher form. It was from this time onward, according to Turgot, that progress became a real and almost inevitable possibility. Turgot emphasized that progress was uniquely human and was possible due to accumulation of knowledge, memory, and written records through several generations. He sharply distinguished human world from the natural world. While in nature the movement is cyclical, in human world it has been mostly linear, collective and, after modern science, inevitable. The wheel of history could not now be turned back; it is bound to move forward and upwards.

9.7 LEGACIES OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The legacies of Enlightenment are so deep and wide-ranging that even today we are considered to be living in the post-Enlightenment world, a world imbued with the ideas broadly generated during the period of Enlightenment. The first and foremost of these is the belief in Reason as separate from and opposed to tradition and blind faith. The belief in the critical scrutiny of various phenomena has been an enduring legacy of Enlightenment. The belief in human potential, in science, and in progress still continues. The idea that rational human beings are able to shape their own destinies without any appeal to divine authorities derived from Enlightenment. Enlightenment put forward the idea that all human beings, anywhere in the world, possessed the same faculties of reasoning and intellect, even though all of them were not in the same stage of development. Moreover, the Enlightenment idea of popular sovereignty has become much wider and deeper. Human freedom has become a core value in today's world and all forms of unfreedom, such as slavery, bondage etc. are criticized. Enlightenment generated the ideas of a broadly rational, individualistic, secular, and progressive world in which most of the humans believe even now. The modern world, at least in its thinking, is a legacy of Enlightenment. Most scholars now associate various aspects of modernity with Enlightenment. In some of its manifestations, Enlightenment can be linked with a variety of modern values such as cosmopolitanism, universalism, rationalism, belief in scientific method and continuous progress, secularism, tolerance, human rights, democracy, and even gender equality.

On the other hand, sometimes consciously but also unintentionally, Enlightenment reinforced the superiority of the modern European countries over the rest of the world. Enlightenment's formula of the stages of development relegated non-European peoples to the lower stages from which they were to be rescued by the more developed Europeans. Modern European values were put forward as norms for the rest of the world, and it was considered as the responsibility of the Europeans to educate and liberate the non-Europeans from their superstitions and bondage to priests and kings. Thus, while they were critical of colonial plunder and exploitation through violence, many Enlightenment thinkers still believed that the Europeans had a role to play in the colonies. Even a radical Enlightenment thinker like Condorcet suggested for the colonial people that 'we would become for them … generous liberators'. And Rousseau stated that the Europeans should 'force them to be free'. Such statements provided ample justification for the later imperialist 'civilizing mission' in the colonial territories. So, it can be said that, in some respects, the Enlightenment left a contradictory legacy which preached both liberation and domination – liberation from superstition, priesthood, and despotism, but domination by modern European values, modern science, and, if needed, by modern European rulers.

Check Your Progress 2

1) What are the legacies of Enlightenment for contemporary world?

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2) Discuss the ideas of two important Enlightenment thinkers.

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9.8 LET US SUM UP

Enlightenment is regarded as the harbinger of the modern world at intellectual level. Its emphasis on rational thinking and on the individual paved the way for breaking away from traditional and religious dogmas and superstitions. Enlightenment thinkers derived from the earlier intellectual movements in science, rationalism and empiricism to put forward their own ideas about nature and society. These thinkers, also known as *philosophes*, believed in scientific method of observation, experimentation, and analysis for the study of society, and doubted the validity of divine revelation and miracles. Individualism, rationalism, universalism, tolerance, and liberalism were some important legacies of the Enlightenment.

9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) See Section 9.3

2) See Section 9.5

Check Your Progress 2

1) See Section 9.7

2) See Section 9.6

UNIT 10 POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*

Structure

10.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will learn the:

- nature of colonization in America,
- role of political and economic factors in American Revolution,
- nature of antagonism between the British Crown and American colonies, and
- nature of resistance and protest of the people in American colonies.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

As a significant event in American world and Atlantic history, the American Revolution has always aroused great interest. A huge amount of literature has been written on it. Some scholars viewed it as a precursor of the most important event which was the formation of the United States. It is thus a key episode in the development of American nationalism and the American state. Some other scholars see the American Revolution as part of a larger age of revolutions and also see it as arising out of global contexts and having major consequences as a major episode in the birth of the modern world. Most of the events that led to the American Revolution and the War of Independence itself are well known, but their interpretations differ. The liberal historians tended to see the American Revolution as having mainly political rather than socio- economic consequences. The Progressive school sees the American Revolution as a broader social-economic upheaval and not merely as a political revolt, akin to the French and

* Resource Person : Prof. Shri Krishan

the Russian Revolutions. Whatever interpretation is accepted, significance of the event cannot be denied. The ideal enshrined in the Declaration of Independence regarding the equality of all men and the 'inalienable rights' of man electrified the atmosphere in America and outside. Thomas Paine, one of the founders of the United States, also participated in the French Revolution. By its example, the American Revolution inspired many revolutionaries across Europe later in the 19th century. It encouraged Spanish and Portuguese colonies in Central and South America to rebel and gain their independence. However, the main accomplishment of the American Revolution was in laying foundation of a republic. This republic was, however, not truly democratic. The right to vote was limited. The Blacks, most of them still slaves, indigenous American Indians, and women had no vote. Election laws in all states favored men of property for many years. But progress towards democracy had begun.

10.2 BACKGROUND OF THE REVOLUTION: NATURE OF COLONISATION IN AMERICA

In 1607 The Virginia Company of London, an English trading company, started the first enduring English settlement in North America at Jamestown. The life of these first settlers was not easy, apart from harsh climate, wild untamed land, the settlers had to face diseases, starvation and the hostility of indigenous population. The successful establishment of this colony was an important achievement in those difficult times. The Virginia Company functioned under a royal charter which was, granted by King James I, which assured the original settlers they would have all liberties, franchises and immunities as if they had been "abiding and born within England."

One of the main reason behind indigenous people' hostility to European settlers was their different perspectives regarding property that you can see from text box -1 below.

> Indigenous American Perspective : "No tribe has the right to sell, even to each other, much less to strangers...Sell a country! Why not sell the air, the great sea, as well as the earth? Didn't the Great Spirit make them all for the use of his children?"
>
> European Perspective : "A right to property is founded in our natural wants, in the means with which we are endowed to satisfy these wants, and the right to what we acquire by those means without violating the similar rights of other sensible beings."

The Virginia Company failed and Jamestown became a royal colony (owned by The British Crown) in 1623. However, the operation and settlement of colonies in America from the very beginning shows how the nature of colonialism was so different to our own experience of colonial rule. The Virginia Company allowed colonists to own their own land (property ownership) and created the House of

Burgesses, a group of elected representatives who made decisions and passed laws for the colony (which means a kind of self-rule permitted to settlers), and naturally they protested when the king eliminated the House of Burgesses.

By 1760, England and Scotland had united into the Kingdom of Great Britain and her settlements in North America had grown to thirteen thriving colonies with strong cultural, economic, and political ties to the mother country. Each colony enjoyed a certain amount of self-rule. The ties which bound Great Britain and her American colonies were many. These colonies could be divided into following three categories.

1) New England colonies: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut (These were formed mostly by religious dissenters, (people who disagree with orthodox existing view.) The colonialists in them were relatively wealthy, skilled and educated and based in cities and towns. The economy of theses colonies was subsistence economy producing only enough to feed urban centres. They engaged in fishing, fur trade, timber, iron works and shipping. There were no big plantation farms and so there was no need for slavery. They were self-governed and made their own laws separate from England.

2) Middle colonies: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware. Originally founded by the Dutch, but later conquered by England , these colonies were ideal for farming with rich soil and mild winters but they did not rely heavily on slave labour. Here, even poor immigrants became wealthy landowners with passage of time. The main resources here were fur, cattle, grain, tobacco, iron, ships, and timber. These colonies were marked by religious and ethnic diversity with a mingling of English Quakers, German Lutherans, French Protestants, etc.

3) Southern colonies: Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia. These were based on Tobacco and rice industry and largely rural colonies. The plantation farming on fertile soil with year-round crops required labor-intensive techniques. It required slaves or indentured servants (people who worked for a set time without pay in exchange for free passage to America). About 68% of the 235,000 African slaves lived in the South and made up nearly half of the entire South's population. But still there was no religious persecution.

Rich and wealthy men in the colonies, such as George Washington, used British trading companies as their agents to conduct business. Young men from prominent families, like Arthur Lee, went to Great Britain to obtain education. Colonial churches received services of ministers who were educated in Great Britain. Many of the brightest men in the colonies, such as Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, James Otis of Massachusetts, and Peyton Randolph of Virginia, served the British government as appointed officials. What then caused these strong ties to be shattered l after 1760? What caused the American colonists to revolt against their mother country in 1775? Though not recognized by most people at the time, economic and political forces beginning in 1760 on both sides of the Atlantic reshaped the relationship between Great Britain and her American colonies.

10.3 INTERFACE OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The establishment of colonies in America provided an outlet to surplus population at home. Under the economic doctrine of mercantilism, the colonies and their economies were also supposed to promote British shipping and commercial interests. The trade in products such as tobacco, wood, and sugar had grown. Despite providing some degree of autonomy to these colonies, the mercantilist thinking of the age believed that colonies should be for the economic benefits of the mother country. So Britain tried to impose trade restrictions from the very beginning on the colonies. There were ways and means by which American colonies and its traders evaded trade control. Navigation Acts of seventeenth century, which were a series of laws passed by England to guarantee profit for itself, sowed the seed of first resentment against England in American colonies. Under these laws, all goods had to be carried on English ships or on ships made in the English colonies. They permitted European imports to the colonies only through English ports and officials were to tax any colonial goods not shipped to England. The Acts led to smuggling and piracy on a large scale to evade the provisions of the Acts.

The Seven Years War (1756-1763), which was a war between a coalition of Great Britain and its allies against a coalition of France and its allies, resulted in expansion of British colonial possessions in America. Financing the administration of these new colonial possessions was a vital problem faced by the British government. The war had been a costly affair and at the end of the Seven Years War, England's national debt stood at over £122 million and even annual interest payment on this debt was nearly £4.5 million. Compounding Britain's financial troubles, the government faced growing protests for tax relief after increasing taxes for war at home. A series of attempts were made to raise more revenue from American colonies and impose strict control over them and their economy. The American colonial resistance found political articulation in opposition to the economic and administrative measures imposed by Britain in the wake of Seven Years War. This found expression in the slogan of *"No taxation without representation!"* which became the political justification of the American revolutionaries. In 1767, patriot merchants throughout the colonies were signing non-importation agreements. In other words, they planned to boycott goods produced in the mother country— especially goods that were being taxed without the colonists' consent. The idea was both novel and brilliant. If the patriot merchants succeeded, they would severely affect the prosperity of English merchants who benefited from trade with the American colonies. Patriots believed that if revenue from the colonies dried up, the English merchants would pressure Parliament to repeal the Townshend Acts, and reestablish free trade with the colonies. John Dickinson wrote a series of twelve letters and published them under the title, *Letters from a Farmer in Philadelphia*. In the Letters, John Dickinson railed against the unconstitutionality of the taxes Parliament was imposing on the colonies. He cited the fact that the revenue collected from the taxes would pay the salaries of royal officials. Previously, it had been the responsibility of each colony's legislature to raise money to pay the royal officials, now that right had been taken out of their hands.

The 'triangular trade' connecting Africa, the New-World plantation-zone and Britain was a central motor of the 'Atlantic economy'. The markets created by the African slave-trade and the plantation-economies for British manufactured goods as diverse as iron, textiles, glass, and china were important stimuli for the growth of industrial capitalism in Britain. Scholarly discussion of plantation-slavery and economic development has produced two broad interpretations. Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, argue that, despite the un-free legal status of slave-labourers, plantation-slavery was a variant of capitalism. The planters' ability to organize their slave-labourers in a centralized labour-process allowed the planters to maximise profits in the production of staple-crops, sugar, tobacco, cotton, etc. for a competitive world-market. On the other hand, Eugene D. Genovese argues that the slaves' un-free legal status gave rise to a number of social-institutional hindrances to the development of capitalism. For a variety of reasons, but most importantly the slaves' supposed lack of motivation and the resulting need for their close supervision in simple, repetitive and unskilled tasks, slavery was an obstacle to technical innovation in agriculture. But, despite having a significant presence on the social map of American South colonies, this particular issue found no resonance in the political discourses of the contemporary times.

10.4 THE CONSEQUENCES OF SEVEN YEAR WAR

The Seven Years War (1756-1763) was a war between a coalition of Great Britain and its allies against a coalition of France and its allies. The war escalated from a regional conflict between Great Britain and France in North America and spread to other colonies and Europe too. George Washington, a wealthy Virginia planter and an officer in the Virginia militia, served under British General Braddock in the early years of this war. The Seven Years War ended in a resounding victory for Great Britain and its allies and a crushing defeat for France and its allies. France lost to Great Britain most of its North American colonial possessions, known as New France. This included Canada and all of its land east of the Mississippi River, including the Ohio Valley. Despite a big military victory, Great Britain faced a number of serious geo-political and financial problems after the war. The first difficulty faced by the British government was how to govern and control vast territories won during war. In North America, the British now had liability for protecting lands acquired in Canada and the areas east of the Mississippi River. These former French colonies included thousands of Indians and many French-speaking Catholics who had no desire to become subjects of the British crown or to live under English common law. This posed the problem of getting consent of the governed in a legitimate manner. Great Britain also had gained control over East and West Florida which Spain, an ally of France, was forced to cede to Great Britain at the end of the war. Financing the administration of these new colonial possessions was a vital problem faced by the British government. The war had been a costly affair and at the end of the Seven Years War, England's the national debt stood at over £122 million and even annual interest payment on this debt was nearly £4.5 million. Compounding Britain's financial troubles, the government faced growing protests for tax relief after increasing taxes for war at home.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Discuss the nature of colonization of America. How do you think it was different from the colonization of India?

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2) How the Seven Years War can be seen as a major catalyst for the American Revolution?

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10.5 GROWING ANTIPATHY BETWEEN THE BRITISH CROWN AND COLONIES IN AMERICA

During the Seven Year War, Britain and the colonies fought side by side. Americans in colonies supported Britain in its war efforts. However, when the war ended, troubles started rising. Britain wanted to govern and control its 13 original colonies and the newly acquired territories as a result of victory in the war in a uniform way. So the British Parliament in London imposed new laws and restrictions and obligations on the colonies. Previously, the colonies had been allowed a fair degree of self-governance. The first of Parliament's enactments was the **Proclamation of 1763**. It did not allow the settlement of the colonists in the west of the Appalachian Mountains. Britain wanted this land to remain in the hands of its indigenous people. There were tensions between Indian tribes (indigenous people) and Great Britain already at the end of the Seven Years War. The Indian tribes living in the Ohio Valley and the Great Lakes had traded with the French for years, few French settlers without taking over their lands. After defeat of France in war, British settlers began crossing the Appalachian Mountain and moving westward (a system of mountains in the Eastern North America) in large numbers looking for good farm land. The actions of Major General Jeffrey Amherst, the British Commander of British forces in North America, also contributed to the tense relations between the British and the Indians in the final years of the war. During the war, the British and the French both tried to gain the support of a number of Indian tribes by giving their chiefs generous gifts. As military operations in North America came to a an end, General Amherst decided to discontinue the practice of giving gifts to Indian chiefs and decided to cut back on trading gunpowder to the Indians. This annoyed Indigenous chiefs further. In May 1763, Pontiac, an Ottawa chief, led a number

of Indian tribes in the area of the Great Lakes in an uprising against British forces and settlers along the frontier. Many British soldiers were killed, and numerous settlers were forced to flee from the region. The Pontiac's Rebellion lasted until 1764. Though peace returned, the possibility of further conflicts with the Indians strongly affected Britain's decision to leave a standing army in America after the Seven Years War.

The proclamation of 1763 enraged colonists who had hoped to move to the fertile Ohio Valley. Many of these colonists had no land of their own. It also upset colonists who had bought land as an investment. The Proclamation affected the rich and powerful social group of American colonies as they had made investment in companies in the hope of making long-term huge profits. Some of these real estate companies were the Ohio Company (established in 1747), the Loyal Company (organized in 1749), and the Mississippi Company (1763). These companies wanted to earn big profits and their modus operandi was to get land at cheap rates from the British and resell the land to new people who wanted to settle in lands beyond the Appalachian Mountains. Some of the men who invested in these companies were big names of American history like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, and Arthur Lee of Virginia and Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania. Unable to obtain title for the land from the British government, the land companies could not make sales. Though agents of the companies were sent to London to argue on behalf of the land companies, the British government refused to reverse its position. The powerful and rich men who had invested in these companies suffered significant financial losses.

King George III, the British monarch, wanted to enforce the proclamation and also keep peace with indigenous Indian tribes. To do this, it was decided to deploy 10,000 soldiers in the colonies. This was done through the passing of the **Quartering Act** in 1765 by the British Parliament. Under the provisions of the Act, the colonies were required to maintain the British soldiers. This was to be done by people of colonies by providing them with residence in their houses and food and other necessities to them. So, it cost nothing to British and the upkeep of their army became an obligation of the colonies. General Thomas Gage, commander of these forces, put most of the troops in New York. Britain had incurred a huge debt from the Seven Year War and was not in a position to maintain its troops in the colonies. By making the colonies pay for its troops stationed there, British Parliament has designed a financial strategy to have the colonies pay part of the war debt. It also wanted them to contribute toward the costs of frontier defense and colonial government. Against the well-established conventions of the past, the colonial assemblies were advised by the King raise new taxes through which military operations in the colonies can be financed by the colonies themselves without burdening the already strained British Government's finances. This time, however, Parliament voted to tax the Americans directly.

An attempt was also made to forcefully implement Britain's trade laws with the American colonies. Smuggling and piracy had made it difficult to enforce Navigation laws. But now, with a substantial presence of the British Navy it was possible to curb colonial smuggling and enforce trade laws more effectively. To obtain this objective, the British government also increasingly began to use an instrument called **Writs of Assistance**. A Writ was a type of search warrant which authorized government officials to look for contraband, such as smuggled goods,

both in private homes and business premises. The writs also placed no limits on the time, place or manner of a search. In 1761, sixty-three Boston merchants challenged the legality of the process. James Otis, Jr., an attorney who had formerly represented the royal government, argued the case for the merchants. Though they lost their case, the surrounding publicity fueled anger within the merchant classes of Boston against the British government.

In 1764, Parliament passed the American Revenue Act of l764, which came to be popularly known as the **Sugar Act**. The Act replaced the existing Sugar and Molasses Act (1733) under which the rate of tax was six pence per gallon on molasses which was imported from the French West Indies or the Dutch West Indies. Molasses was an important ingredient in the manufacture of rum which was one of New England's most important emerging industry. The purpose of the enactment was not to generate revenue bill but it was designed more as a means to regulate trade. The main objective of the Act was to support imports from the British West Indies and discourage imports from the French and Dutch West Indies. Due to wide-spread smuggling and bribery, the tax on molasses from the French and Dutch West Indies was rarely collected. So. on April 5, 1764, the British Parliament replaced it with the American Revenue Act of 1764. While the new act cut the tax on molasses in half, Britain's Finance Minister Grenville anticipated that more forceful collection of the duties would bring in more revenue. The act further empowered customs officials to have all violations of the law tried in Vice Admiralty courts rather than general courts. Vice Admiralty courts had jurisdiction over maritime issues, while general courts handled criminal cases in the colonies. Vice admiralty courts, unlike general courts, did not use juries, and Grenville recognized that colonial juries were often very considerate to popular local merchants involved in smuggling. The Sugar Act would meet with major resistance in New England where the manufacture of rum from molasses had become a major industry. Colonial leaders such as James Otis claimed that Briitsh Parliament had no legal right to raise revenue in the colonies, since people living in the American colonies had not a single representative in that Parliament. As Otis exclaimed, "Taxation without representation is tyranny!" British ruling circles disagreed. They maintained that the people of American colonies were subjects of Britain and enjoyed the protection of its laws. So, it was legitimate to tax them.

The British had their own financial compulsions as they needed more revenue for military operations in America and more troops were to deployed in order to maintain its controls over the colonies. In order to pay the expenses involved in this military deployment in North America, Grenville proposed a **Stamp Act** (1765) for the colonies. A stamp duty was in existence in England since 1694 and proved useful in collecting revenues. Under the provisions of the Stamp Act, a tax was imposed on all legal documents. Items such as commercial contracts, newspapers, legal wills, marriage certificates, diplomas and degrees, pamphlets, and even playing cards — all were taxed in the American colonies. The Stamp Act was the first direct tax used by the British government to collect revenues from the colonies. Though there were some objections in British Parliament to imposing a stamp tax to collect revenue from the colonies, it appeared a natural law to most members of British Parliament. Another economic step passed by Parliament was what came to be known as the **Currency Act (1764).** Bills of Credit were, like currency notes, were also issued by the government and they were in circulation as a kind of alternative currency. This act outlawed the use of

bills of credit as a medium of currency or as an alternative mode of payment by the American colonies. Bills of credit was a local answer to the shortage of silver and gold currency in the colonies. These instruments were supported by the credit of the government in a colony which issued them. Now the American traders and businessmen could not make payment and transactions with their British counterparts through this mode. This was in favour of British businessmen because the value of these bills of credits has declined in the market over the years. It led to widespread economic malfunction because now the British businessmen demanded payment only in silver and gold currency. This was unjustified because the bills of credit were also issued by the British Government and they represented accumulated credit of the American colonies.

While many colonists blamed the Currency Act for causing the downturn in the economy, there were not any extensive protests over this measure in the colonies. It was perceived by many viewed the act as an extension of those earlier power of the British Parliament. The resentment against the Sugar Act were also fairly low-key affairs as it did not affect common people though trading community especially in the New England colony was upset. Samuel Adams, who was a popular leader in Boston area especially among political clubs that had sprang up there recently, was opposed to the move and organized a movement against the imposition of Sugar tax. He, further, attempted to plead with the Massachusetts General Assembly to move in the same direction. Some Boston merchants agreed to boycott the purchase of British luxury goods in reprisal. Thus began the boycott of British goods, as a tool of colonial protest. A five member Committee of Correspondence was appointed in June 1764 in Massachusetts to coordinate action and exchange information with other colonies.

10.6 COLONIAL RESISTANCE ERUPTS: REACTIONS TO STAMP ACT

The Stamp Act was a new kind of tax for the colonies. The Stamp Act was a new tax applied within the colonies. It fell directly on all colonists. Even more, the colonists had to pay for stamps in silver coin— in a scarce thing in the colonies. Colonial leaders vigorously protested its one-sided imposition. They believed that were being taxed without their consent by a Parliament in which they had no voice. The resistance was speedy and passionate. The first official opposition to the stamps came from the Virginia House of Burgesses. On May 29, 1765, the House of Burgesses passed five resolves proposed by Patrick Henry. The Virginia Resolves tied the liberties and immunities enjoyed by Virginians in 1765 to the first two royal charters granted by King James I in the early 17th century. The third resolution boldly stated:

"That the Taxation of the People by themselves, or by Persons chosen by themselves to represent them, who can only know what taxes the people are able to bear, or the easiest Method of raising them, and must themselves be affected by every Tax laid on the people, is the only Security against a burdensome Taxation...."

The fifth resolve, the most radical of the five resolutions passed by the House, stated that only the General Assembly of Virginia had the power to lay taxes on its inhabitants. This declaration reflected the growing principle in the colonies that there could be no taxation without representation. These radical, although

expunged from the official records later by political alliance of moderate and conservative elements. Other colonial assemblies followed Virginia's bold lead. Shortly after Virginia's action, the Massachusetts lower house proposed a meeting of representatives from all of the colonies. This meeting, known as the Stamp Act Congress, met in New York in October 1765. A Stamp Act Congress was organized in New York in which delegates from nine colonies took part. This was one of the earliest instance when the colonies combined together in protest. Delegates prepared a petition to be sent to the king as a sign of protest against the Stamp Act. The petition affirmed that the Crown had no right to impose tax on the people of colonies, rather it could be done only by the colonial assemblies. The right of the British Parliament was challenged. Colonial assemblies and newspapers proclaimed—*"No taxation without representation!"*. In addition to protests by colonial legislatures, mobs in numerous cities violently demonstrated against the Stamp Act. Many of these crowds often went by such patriotic names as the Sons of Liberty and the Liberty Boys. These secretive and volatile groups, often composed of printers and artisans, were led by some of the most powerful men in the colonies. Samuel Adams led the Sons of Liberty in Boston. In addition to mob violence, other groups organized efforts to boycott the British goods. Parliament finally saw that the Stamp Act was a mistake and repealed it in 1766. But at the same time, The British Parliament was ready with another legislation which was named as the 'Declaratory Act'. This piece of legislation affirmed the supreme authority of British Parliament in matters of governance and taxation. The Americans celebrated the revoke of the Stamp Act. They ignored the new legislation as simply without the real substance because they had successfully challenged the right of British Parliament in concrete manner and the Declaratory Act made no difference. A war between the British Parliament and the colonies had begun.

10.7 THE TOWNSHEND ACTS AND CONTINUATION OF PROTEST

After the political upheaval over the Stamp Act, Britain wished to avoid any further clash with colonies. Even so, it faced financial compulsions and was in need of revenue generating avenues to pay for troops and cost of administration in America. Charles Townshend , the new Finance Minister of Britain proposed three new measures that became known as the **Townshend Acts**. These consisted of the Revenue Act of 1767, the Suspension of the New York Assembly Act, and the Board of Customs Act. The Revenue Act laid new taxes on the colonies. As a measure of raising more revenue, it imposed new import duties on commodities like lead, glass, paints, and tea. The New York Assembly Act suspended the New York Assembly until it agreed to obey the Quartering Act. The American Board of Customs Act established a Board of Customs Commission in Boston to enforce the duties imposed by the Revenue Act and created new Vice Admiralty courts in Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston.

However, the colonies immediately protested the imposition of Townshend duties. They had developed organizational networks and leant mass mobilization techniques after the Stamp Act protest, the colonies quickly moved again by boycotting British goods as an effective tool of protest. Though the opposition to the Townshend duties was not as violent as the mob protests over the Stamp Act, the colonists resorted again through sending their petitions. Apprehensive

of another big upheaval, the British Parliament rescinded all of the Townshend duties in 1770 except the tea tax which was maintained as a token to demonstrate Parliament's supremacy over the colonies.

10.8 THE BOSTON CARNAGE, THE BOSTON TEA PARTY, AND THE INTOLERABLE ACTS

Nevertheless, the troubles were not over, there continued to be confrontations between British soldiers and colonists. The colonists were also angry about the writs of assistance. Many believed that the writs went against their natural rights and felt that the Townshend Acts were a serious threat to their rights and freedoms. Continued enforcement of British trade laws and the presence of British soldiers in several major port cities remained a perpetual source of these conflicts. On March 5, 1770, one such incident occurred when British soldiers in Boston fired into a mob, killing five people. The incident became known as **the Boston Massacre** and received wide-spread publicity throughout the colonies. Though there was a general outcry throughout the colonies to the Boston Massacre, the British government allowed the soldiers to be tried in Massachusetts. Six of the eight British soldiers on trial were acquitted while the remaining two were convicted of manslaughter. Many on both sides of the Atlantic felt the soldiers received a fair trial.

To protest the Townshend Acts, colonists in Boston announced another boycott of British goods in October 1767. The driving force behind this protest was Samuel Adams, a leader of the Boston Sons of Liberty. Adams urged colonists to continue to resist British controls. The boycott spread throughout the colonies. The Sons of Liberty compelled shopkeepers and traders not to sell British imported goods. The Daughters of Liberty called on colonists to weave their own cloth and use American products. As a result, imports from Britain declined sharply.

Then, in 1773, the British Parliament passed the **Tea Act** to safeguard its own interests. Tea had become a popular drink in the American colonies and large amount of it was imported illegally from Holland. The Tea Act was an attempt to put the British East India Company in command of the American tea trade so that it can tide over its financial difficulties. Under this act, the tea imported by the East India company was made duty-free and it could directly export tea to American colonies. Even though the company's tea was still subject to the Townshend tax, but allowing duty-free arrival of the East India Company's tea made it possible to sell its tea cheaper than the tea coming from Holland. It was like granting sole right to import tea to the East India Company as now only its ships carried tea to the ports of colonies and only the merchants of East India Company sold it in American markets. Earlier the consumers in Colonies had been enjoying tea coming through traders from Holland. Since most of it arrived in America illegally they did not have to pay any tax on consumption of such tea. Now even the cheaper British tea became costly as this has to pay Townshend tax on it too. Soon protests against the Tea Act took place all over the colonies. It spread to South Carolina, New York City and Philadelphia. In Boston, the Sons of Liberty organized what came to be popularly known as the **Boston Tea Party**. On the evening of December 16, 1773, a group of men boarded three tea ships docked in Boston Harbour and destroyed huge amount of tea. Some colonial leaders offered to pay for the tea if Parliament would repeal the Tea Act. Britain rejected the offer. It not only wanted compensation for the loss, but it also wanted

the men who destroyed the tea to be brought to books. The British response to the Boston Tea Party only helped in spreading the protest to other colonies, and soon all places were in flames of rebellion. It ended any hope to reconciliation with the British Crown. The British government the episode of the Boston Tea Party as a senseless destruction of private property by a group of hooligans. Instead of appeasing the colonies by repealing the Tea Act, the British government decided to punish Boston and the people of Massachusetts with a series of repressive acts which became known as **the Intolerable Acts**.

The first of these measures, the Boston Port Act, was passed in March 1774. This act provided for the closure of port of Boston and full compensation to the East India Company for the damages incurred by it and a payment to the British Government equivalent to the loss of custom duty in American colonies. The second of these measure was the enactment of the Administration of Justice Act (1774). Under this law, if any British official was found involved in a crime that was committed while performing his duty of enforcing law and order or helping in controlling a riot, then British government could allow a change of venue to another British colony or to Great Britain, instead of an American colony, for trials of such officials. The third of the Intolerable Acts, better known as the Massachusetts Government Act, was a law to done away with the popularly elected upper council of the colony and to replace it with a 12-36 nominated member council, with all its members to be nominated by the King. The fourth of the Intolerable Acts was the Quartering Act. This law was passed on June 2, 1774. Like the preceding Quartering Act, the revised rule allowed a colonial governor to make provisions for British soldiers to be housed in vacant houses and barns.

Mass protests in the colonies followed the passage Intolerable Acts. There were protests in legislatures of colonies and mass constitutional and extra-constitutional mobilization soon followed. In July 1774, George Washington, now a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses, and his neighbor, George Mason, drafted the Fairfax Resolves. These resolves listed many common grievances against the British rule, called for boycott of British goods, demanded an end to the slave trade, and urged the calling of a general congress of representatives of all colonies which would make draft of a petition to the King on behalf of all colonists. George Washington carried the Fairfax Resolves to the Virginia Houses of Burgesses which took up the matter on August 1, 1774, as the First Virginia Convention, the revolutionary body which governed Virginia until l776. Across the thirteen colonies, local groups were adopting similar resolutions to protest the Intolerable Acts.

10.9 ROAD TO REVOLUTIONARY WAR AND DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

The British goal of isolating and making an example of the people of Boston and the Massachusetts colony using the Intolerable Acts completely failed. Instead of isolating Massachusetts from the other colonies, it united the colonies against The British power. More and more people joined into the ranks of the patriots. The number of loyalists, people who supported the British government, declined considerably. This congress, known as the first Continental Congress, met briefly in Philadelphia from September 5 to October 26, 1774, to consider ways of redressing colonial grievances and became a symbol of national unity. Delegates

to this convention included George Washington and Patrick Henry of Virginia and John Adams and Samuel Adam of Massachusetts. The Congress constituted a body called The Continental Association. This body worked for implementing a public boycott of British goods in the American colonies. The Congress also gave consent to an open 'Declaration of Rights' of American citizens. It denied the British right to impose taxes in American colonies and stoutly affirmed that people of America could be taxed only by their own representative and legislative bodies.

By late l774, provisional governments, some of which came to be known as 'Committees of Safety', took control of administration in some of the American colonies. Local militias fully armed and trained in use of arms were formed in many places to assist these provisional governments. In September 1774, British General Thomas Gage, the newly appointed as the governor of Massachusetts, took control of the guns and other weapons stored in garrisons of Charles Town and Cambridge and also began to fortify his position in the city of Boston. The British Parliament declared Massachusetts in a state of rebellion in February 1775 and authorized General Gage to use force to crush the rebellion. On April 14, 1775, General Gage was ordered to make British government in the area safe by disarming all rebels and arresting main rebel leaders. British troops left Boston on the night of April 18, 1775, to seize the munitions stored by the patriots in Concord. Patriot spies gave warning of the movement of British troops, and minutemen assembled along the road from Boston to Lexington. The conflict the next day between the British soldiers and the New England minutemen (local militiamen who can be available in a minute for military service) in Lexington transformed into a full-fledged war. Meanwhile the second Continental Congress reconvened in Philadelphia and authorized the creation of the Continental Army and, on June 15, 1775, appointed George Washington commander of the American revolutionary forces.

Some people still wavered and hoped for a peace. But finally, on July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress adopted a document that proclaimed independence—the Declaration of Independence. The core idea of the Declaration was that people have unalienable rights, or rights that If not recognized by a government then it lose the right to govern people. This is how Jefferson explained it. The people then have the right to overthrow that government and use of force for that purpose was justified. They also have a right o establish a government of their own that would recognize their rights and protect them. When Jefferson spoke of "the people," however, he had in his mind only free white men. Women and slaves were denied any rights so the Declaration was restrictive in the sense that not all people were treated equal. The Declaration gave the reasons for breaking ties with Britain and declaring colonies free and independent.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Discuss the process of growing antagonism between the British Crown and its American colonies.

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2) Examine the nature of resistance to of the people of American colonies against the British Crown.

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10.10 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have seen how the nature of colonies in American differed from the rest of the world, allowing them a degree of autonomy and self-governance. The relationship between changed after Britain's Seven Years War with France. The financial troubles that arose in the wake of this great war, gradually led to growing antagonism between the British Crown and the American colonies. The ethnic and religious composition of the colonies provided a uniqueness to this antagonism. This was the background of the protest and resistance that evolved in American colonies. This eventually led to a revolutionary war and final creation of United States of America. Although a republic was born after the American revolutionary war, the birth of this republic bore the imprint of social hierarchies of the day and it was in reality a republic of propertied white males. A limitation against which the democratic and civil rights.

10.11 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) See Section 10.2

2) See Section 10.3

Check Your Progress 2

1) See Section 10.5

2) See Sections 10.6, 10.7 and 10.8

UNIT 11 AGRICULTURAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN EUROPE*

Structure

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to understand:

- the significance of the eighteenth century from the point of view of agriculture,
- agricultural transformation in the north-western countries of Europe,
- state of agriculture in France, the Netherlands, Germany and some other regions,
- the nature and impact of the 'agrarian revolution' in Britain,
- the relationship between agricultural changes and growth of population,
- the factors determining population trends, and
- how the share of agriculture was shrinking compared to industry and commerce in the economy in terms of job creator and wealth generator.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Agriculture had always been the key sector in the economy of pre-modern Europe. It provided employment to a significant portion of population. Till the eighteenth century, hardly any technological innovation was carried out in most regions of Europe with the exception of England, the Netherlands and the north-western states. Population and agriculture had a close relationship, particularly in those

* Resource Person : Prof. Arvind Sinha

regions where natural or subsistence economy existed and agriculture continued to be dependent on natural resources. It is debatable whether the growth of population was due to improved methods of agricultural production and better nutrition or due to the rising population that had applied pressure on agriculture which led to the extension of cultivable land by cutting forests and woodlands, and reclamation of swamps and wastelands. There is a need to examine the factors responsible for demographic upward trend. By eighteenth century, it was not the quality of soil or access to water resources that determined the level of agriculture, but the growing pressures of the market that brought changes in the nature of production. The agrarian revolution in England from the late-eighteenth century demonstrated the scale of agricultural transformation and its contribution to the newly emerging industrial sector. To understand this, there is a need to study the reasons for regional variations in agriculture as well as the demographic trends.

11.2 STATE OF AGRICULTURE ON THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT

Eighteenth century represented growth and expansion of economy in many states after a century of retrogression and stagnation. Signs of agricultural growth in the north-western states were evident. Manufacturing was taking the form of rural cottage industry and capitalist relations were emerging but most regions of Europe feudal system prevailed. The seventeenth century was a period of rural depression in central and southern regions of Europe. In England, agricultural transformation had commenced with technological progress that continued during the next century and contributed in the increase of productivity. European agriculture till the early nineteenth century presented an uneven picture where northern and Western Europe had moved towards capitalist structure while central, eastern and southern regions were still grappling to break the feudal shackles. You have already studied the state of agriculture in different parts of Europe in the first Unit. In this Unit, let us briefly review the agricultural trends of some major countries during the eighteenth century.

11.2.1 France

Territorially, France is almost four times the size of England. Scholars of pre-modern France have divided French economy of the eighteenth century into two prime geographical zones: 1) interior France of north which specialized in cereal production, and 2) the wine-producing zone of the south. France had a long coastal belt along the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. The expansion of colonial trade had led to the growth of towns and industries in the coastal region, but the interior regions remained feudal agrarian lands with low productivity. Yet, the Seine valley near Paris was a relatively advanced region where capitalist relations of production were emerging. In the rest of France, seigneurialism (feudal landlordism) was still the dominant aspect of agrarian life. It was the foundation of rural-social relations and an integral economic fabric of the ancient regime.

Peasants in France constituted a stratified group who were very poor. They formed semi-proletarian group called by different names such as *manouvriers, journaliers*etc. They possessed small pieces of land but they were insufficient for their subsistence and hence they had to work on the fields of others. Any kind of crisis pushed them to the ranks of wage-earners. They constituted the exploited section of the feudal order and the scale of their exploitation varied from one

region to another. Usually, they had no rights of ownership but many of them had the right to tenure for centuries that made them virtual proprietors. The middle segment was called *haricotier* and they were slightly better-off. The wealthiest and the best equipped were the *gros fermiers*, who owned vast stretches of land. When the government exempted cleared land from forests or marshy areas in 1763 and 1766, the *gros-fermiers* were the first to grab the opportunity. During the second half of the eighteenth century, when the grain prices were soaring, this class gained through land amalgamation. Landowners took advantage of the rise of cereal prices and land rents and the seigniors imposed fresh obligations on the peasants and tried to strengthen their power over rural produce. A strong reaction of the lower peasants was due to two forms of amalgamation:

a) The rural proprietors had gradually expanded their estates by absorbing adjacent holdings either through purchase or foreclosure, and

b) By acquiring scattered farms one by one at the expense of small peasants.

Unlike the rural scene of England where the middling sort of peasants became the new landlords, the French agriculture's social and economic structure was still numerically dominated by the small peasant producers. According to Alfred Soboul, it was the persistence of land property rights that prevented proper restructuring of the French agriculture. The feudal structure remained strong and protected by the feudal absolutist monarchy that placed checks on the transfer of peasants' property. The extra-economic coercion by the seigniorial class prevented any major breakthrough in French agriculture.

During the eighteenth century, some changes in rural France were discernible in land clearances, decrease in fallow land, increasing yield ratio, some new agricultural techniques, and in agrarian organization. However, the pace of change was too slow and confined to specific regions. There was no agrarian revolution of the English type. Production kept pace with increasing population for most part of the century without transforming the technology and productivity. This makes Michel Morineau observe that the expansion of French agriculture was a 'development within stagnation'. Yet capitalist forces began to emerge at a few places where productivity of soil increased with the introduction of some new methods and greater use of fertilizers. Some improvements were noticed in the north-east regions like the French Flanders which were following new methods of agriculture borrowed indirectly from Belgium and the Netherlands. Between 1751 and 1760, Duhamel du Monceau brought out 'Introduction to improving agriculture' in 6 volumes. His ideas were largely borrowed from those prevalent in England. It was particularly publicized by the 'physiocrats' like Turgot and Nemour, who were advocating reform of the agrarian structure on capitalist lines.

Another noticeable change in rural France was the rise of ~~a~~ professional class of 'managers' or the *fermiers généneaux*. They were like the capitalists who rented estates of one or more landlords and usually functioned as collectors of seigniorial dues and tithes of the church. We do not find any enclosure movement in France like the one in England. Some individual landlords did approach the French government demanding enclosures around their estates from the mid-eighteenth century but King Louis XV showed no interest in it. Yet, some individuals carried out amalgamation of scattered land accompanied by ousting the original owners or tenants. Here, they tried scientific method of farm management. Georges Lefebvre described them as rural bourgeoisie. They were different from the

traditional seigneurs because they had appropriated surplus land for making profit from production while the seigneurs were only interested in increasing their dues.

Growing population pressure in the eighteenth century along with increasing grain prices caused seigneurial reaction. It meant intensification of feudal obligations. Harvest dues of the lords proved most burdensome for the peasants. Taxes on property transfers like *lods, ventes.*and *rachets* were introduced; however, the seigneurial reaction varied from one region to another. According to C. Lis and U. Soly, peasants had to pay about 25 to 30 per cent of their produce to a small minority of feudal lords. Between 1720-29 and 1780-89, the rent increased by 142 per cent while agricultural prices rose by 60 per cent.

In most parts of France, three-fourths of the peasants owned less than five hectares of land which was considered minimum to retain economic independence. Of these, 25 per cent of peasants had barely 1 hectare to cultivate. Besides, the peasants were heavily burdened by taxes like *taille* (land tax imposed by the state), *tithe* (payable to the church varying from 8 to 12.5 per cent) and *corvee* (services to be rendered to the seigneurs, which was later converted to money rent) impeded any attempts of land reforms. A large number of very small land holdings and the surplus extraction by the seigneurs prevented the introduction of improvements in land management and technology to augment productivity. It is estimated that the number of rural proletariat and semi-proletariat had grown substantially during the eighteenth century. According to Lis and Soly, the percentage of day labourers had increased from 12 per cent in 1696 to almost 23.3 by 1789. Since industrialization in France was at quite a slow pace, this must have caused immense suffering for this section of peasantry.

A controversy exists over key issues regarding economic and social evolution of the French countryside during the second half of eighteenth century. There are divergent views among the historians. The main debate is on the question of whether agricultural production stagnated or increased during the period of transition. Jean Claude Toutain suggests that there was an increase in agricultural production between 1750 and 1790 at an annual rate of 1.4 per cent that amounted to 60 per cent despite several famines. Michel Morineau questions the methodical base of the figures. He contends that the first national agriculture census was conducted in 1840 which suggests that agriculture hardly made any progress. According to him, agriculture was fragile and highly vulnerable to fluctuation, it was under heavy tax burden, peasant property was fragmented into small land holdings and the continuation of communal rights in agriculture prevented migration of workforce to urban centres.

Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie rejects this argument and contends that there was hardly 25 to 40 per cent increase between 1700-09 and 1789-89. Ladurie further argues that no agrarian revolution was experienced in France. Though the production increased, there was no change in productivity (measured in terms of new crops, new techniques and increased yields per acre).

One of the most contentious aspects of the agrarian life during the eighteenth century was the village common land. It reinforced the collective nature of rural life. It was based on the principle of feudalist ‘collective usage’ as opposed to the idea of individual ownership. A bitter debate took place during the second half of the eighteenth century between the supporters of mercantilist regulations of the state and the Physiocrats like Vincent de Gourney, Quesney, Nemour, etc.

Gourney, in his articles in *Encyclopedie* (1756-57), attributed the decline of French agriculture to a) heavy taxes and b) artificially low price of corn caused by ban on export. He advocated large-scale farming, prosperity of farmers and substantial capital investment in agriculture. The Physiocrats considered agriculture to be the real creator of wealth and favoured natural laws of economy. They advocated large-scale capitalist farming, promotion of private property, liberation of producers from feudal and guild restrictions, bourgeois form of land tenures, freedom from seigneurial customs and capitalist form of rent. These scholars were opposed to state regulation and the famous finance minister Necker removed state protection of grain prices in 1776. Henri Leonard Bertin, a well-known agronomist, attempted to abolish collective practices and reform the usage and tenure of common land through the edicts of 1761 and 1766. The land clearance edict of July 1770 marked a distinctive legislative victory for agrarian individualism in Languedoc.

There are two divergent pictures of the French agriculture as presented by Arthur Young, the famous English traveller and scholar who travelled across France from 1787-89 and Alexis de Tocqueville, the French minister and great scholar of 1840s and 50s.In his *Travels in France* (1792), Arthur Young states that France was a country 'possessing nothing but privilege and poverty'. In 1788, he observed the sub-division and wide dispersal of holdings that provided further obstacles to the diversification of crops and selective breeding. While Young wrote a gloomy picture of French agriculture, highlighting its poverty and backwardness, for Tocqueville, the French agricultural scene was progressing well.

The French Revolution brought a sudden change by abolishing the feudal structure through the legislation of 1789 and 1793 along with the destruction of the seigneurial regime based on privileges and taxation rights. Its impact was not felt immediately and the actual reshaping of rural France took place by mid-nineteenth century with the coming of new forms of communications, railways and big industries which helped in the creation of a national market.

11.2.2 Germany

The German agrarian condition was very similar to the one that existed in pre-revolutionary France. The German nobility was constantly criticized by the bourgeois enlightened scholars without much effect. The pace of agrarian reforms was too slow and the emancipation of peasants did not end the feudal agrarian relationship. The real change came only in the nineteenth century.

During the eighteenth century, Germany showed signs of socio-economic changes that were bringing slow transformation of agrarian society. The population growth during the eighteenth century became more marked from 1756. Progress in the early years of the eighteenth century was disrupted due to the War of Austrian Succession in 1740s and the Seven Years War in 1750s. A spurt in industrial production and the demographic growth stimulated agriculture by creating demand for food grain and raw materials, and the widening market stimulated agriculture. The rise of towns and urbanization began to put pressure on the rural economy.

One of the catalysts for agrarian change was the population growth, like England, but the change came much later, perhaps in the second half of the eighteenth century. Unutilized land was brought under cultivation and agrarian reforms

contributed in increased production. The Enlightenment ideas encouraged the rulers to carry out diverse reforms through state initiative. The adoption of improved 'three-field' system and crop-rotation resulted in increased yield per acre to feed the growing population. Among the new plant crops was maize to supplement the traditional food supplies in some states of Germany like Baden, Wurttenberg, the Palatine, etc. Introduction of potato cultivation by state governments but was initially resisted by the peasants but experience revealed its benefits. It could be sown in infertile soil or in unfavourable climate. In 1770-71, potato cultivation became a life saver when there was a famine caused by grain failure.

The German agriculture also contributed to industrialization by providing raw material like flax, hemp, chicory, hops, tobacco and grapes for wine. The main production centres of hemp were in Baden, Westphalia, Hesse and Wurttemberg. Hemp was used for making ropes; it was used in coarse textiles of common use and for extracting oil. Flax was used for finer textiles and was grown in Silesia, Westphalia, Hanover and Bohemia. Chicory was used as a coffee substitute and tobacco cultivation was promoted by the state governments but did not achieve much success. Also, till the end of the eighteenth century, none of these crops made Germany a specialized region or helped it in capturing international market.

The expansion of meadows was another special feature in many parts of Europe from the late-seventeenth century. It promoted animal husbandry and also provided manure in larger quantities to help agriculture. During the later years of the eighteenth century, a few improvements were made in agricultural practices such as sowing the fallow lands with nitrogen-fixing plants and greater care of meadows and animals. These steps saw significant improvements in productivity. Proper land utilization was another noticeable development in the eighteenth century though its fruits appeared in the next century. The concepts of fallow land and three-field system were disappearing with the introduction of clover, legumes and root crops like potato, turnip, etc. Marginal lands were reclaimed. The privileges of powerful nobles were curtailed by the enlightened despots and a limited form of enclosures had emerged. However, the feudal structure had not been dismantled.

Like England, the German agrarian relations were influenced by the market forces but the feudal nobility could not be destroyed alone by the rulers. It was only in the nineteenth century that new landowning class emerged along with the capitalists and military elements that became the pillars of power in unified Germany.

In the eighteenth century, a gradual difference emerged between the agrarian system of Germany in the east and the west of river Elbe. The western region experienced restricted commercialization and intensification of agriculture that was attempted by the state. The eastern parts of Germany remained locked under the shackles of feudal ruler-nobles nexus. They placed obstacles on the path of capitalist market society. The landed magnets in Germany became politically powerful till the First World War.

11.2.3 The Netherlands

As in England, the landowners in the Netherlands during the eighteenth century were able to overcome the agrarian problems by adopting new techniques and

new methods of farming. Among them, enclosure of open fields and crop rotation were most important. The major centre of agronomical experiments was located in southern Netherland. Flanders and Brabant had achieved the highest yield ratios in Europe. This was possible because of the high labour-intensive farming, good quality fertilizers, advanced methods of crop rotation and production of good quality fodder and commercial crops for the market. As a result, by mid-eighteenth century, this region was exporting five per cent of the yearly produce of grain.

Except for Holland, cereal cultivation came to be practiced in most parts of the Netherlands though rice was the main crop. It was used for preparing gin and bread. In times of food scarcity, it could be mixed with oats or other cereals to make bread. The consumption of wheat bread increased during the eighteenth century. Regions like Zeeland had started cultivating wheat when its demand was increasing. However, wheat imports declined and its consumption reduced with sudden rise in its prices. In rest of the regions, rye cultivation remained popular among the peasants. Foodstuffs like buckwheat were fast replacing wheat and by 1798, its consumption constituted 17 per cent of the total cereal consumption in Holland (J.A. van Houtte).

Potato was another crop that was fast becoming popular in Brabant, Zeeland, Utretcht and Friesland. Its popularity was due to high cost of grain during famines. It was preferred by the cultivators too as potato was exempt from the *tithe* and increasing rates of taxes. Other crops like flax, hemp, hop and tobacco continued to be grown in many states in the eighteenth century. After 1750, decline of textile industry in this region adversely affected the cultivation of flax.

Flanders had heavy density of population and small fragmented landholdings. Yet, crop rotation was introduced and it contributed to intense cultivation in this region, an innovation borrowed by England from here. Flanders had shown to the neighbouring countries the importance of intensive cultivation through crop rotation. This was adopted in many regions including Antwerp, Campier and northern Brabant. It was adopted by small farmers as well as in lands of proprietors. The inferior land could be utilized either for stock farming or potato cultivation; the latter could be cultivated in small units of land. According to Lis and Soly, the proportion of the small farms of less than one hectare was 49 per cent in 1711 but by 1790, it had gone up to 66 per cent. The peasants of Flanders experienced disruption of the traditional order as the landlords had started raising rents seeing the demographic pressure while the merchants and manufacturers were keeping the wages low. The spread of proto-industrialization for the preparation of linen from the late-seventeenth century had shifted the manufacturing activities to the countryside in order to avoid the whims of urban guilds.

11.2.4 Russia

The problem of Russia was quite different. The vast territory with very low density of population was a problem for the government. It needed large peasant population base for state taxes and for the recruitment of soldiers. It was for this reason that serfdom was imposed from above. It was outlined in the legal code of 1649 in the *Ulozhenie* which included *barschina* (forced labour) and led to the decline of the *mir* (village community). The availability of vast land and cruel forms of exploitation resulted in constant migration of peasants. Villages

were isolated and peasants were under constant distress. StenkaRazin's rising in southern Russia (1667-71) began as a form of banditry and then turned into a vast protest against serfdom.

Feudalism in Russia survived in varying degrees of rigour, with range of dues and services that were part of seigneurial rights. Strengthening of the ties of mutual interest bound the Czars and the landowners. The Russian peasants were growing in numbers but during the eighteenth century, were not secured. They were sent out to farm new lands. Catherine the Great, known to be a leading enlightened ruler, transferred 800,000 serfs into private ownership. These serfs could not marry, move or take up a trade without the permission of the feudal land owner. Thus, while feudal structure was destroyed in north-western regions of Europe, in Russia, the period of enserfment had started that lasted till the second half of the nineteenth century.

11.3 AGRICULTURE IN BRITAIN AND THE AGRARIAN REVOLUTION

Economically, Britain became the leader in agrarian and industrial fields. According to E.J. Hobsbawm, agriculture held an important place in England for two reasons – first it was the indispensable foundation for industry and second, the 'landed interest' dominated British politics and social life.

Major changes in the English agrarian structure were experienced after the Bourgeois Revolution of mid-seventeenth century. It marked the advent of capitalist land relations that brought an end to the feudal economic structure including the land tenures. The share of agriculture in the overall employment throughout the century continued to shrink from 80 per cent around 1700 to about 40 per cent in 1800. Yet, the decreasing agricultural force was able to feed the growing population of England.

During the sixteenth century, a decisive shift in agriculture had already begun. According to Robert Brenner, the English ruling class was the most self-organized one in Europe and was able to exploit the peasantry and by eighteenth century, they dispossessed the peasantry by means of enclosures. It was the retention of property rights that enabled the lords to undermine the customary rights and copyholds of the peasantry in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and enabled them to farm their holdings on capitalist lines.

According to Phyllis Deane, there were four major feature of the British agrarian revolution. It involved farming in large consolidated units instead of the medieval practice of open-field cultivation. Second, it involved the extension of arable farming instead of heaths (open uncultivated land) and adoption of intensive livestock husbandry. Third, it implied the transformation of village community of self-sufficient peasants into labourers, dependent on market forces rather than on local factors. Fourth, it involved an increase of agricultural productivity. These characteristics were evident by the eighteenth century.

Enclosures

The enclosure movement was an important factor in rural transformation that brought about the 'agrarian revolution' in England. Till the eighteenth century, cultivation system varied from place to place. The persistence of open fields or

its conversion to enclosed ones depended on various factors like the quality of soil, nature of produce and its distance from the market. Even in the eighteenth century, nearly half of the agricultural land in England was still held in intermixed open-field system.

The farmers of big estates were interested in consolidating their landholdings in order to use new methods of cultivation and make profit from it. The open field system had dominated rural England since the Middle Ages. Even the big landlords had scattered holdings interspersed by land strips owned by neighbours. Owners of such scattered holdings were compelled to follow traditional practices of cultivation. The open-field system was a big hindrance in the adoption of new methods and technology as the whole village community decided on the choice of crop or the number of cattle each member could take for grazing and quantity of wood that could be collected from the forest.

Since the end of fifteenth century, private enclosures were carried out but the process of consolidation of landholdings was legalized by the acts of parliament during the eighteenth century. The Tudor rulers of the sixteenth century did not encourage enclosures fearing social and political upheavals. Its interests were to keep the peasants tied to their land as enclosures would have caused large-scale evictions. Thus enclosure drive was kept in check till the late seventeenth century when political power came in the hands of new landed class and bourgeoisie. Voluntary enclosures were difficult to achieve because the earlier legislation made them necessary to have the consent of all the members of the village including the poor farmers. Parliament usually passed the Enclosure Act now in response to a village a petition supported by $4/5^{th}$ of the land owners including the ecclesiastical land owners. The entire procedure of land enclosure was difficult and expensive. The land was surveyed and land redistribution had to be done in proportion to the earlier holdings.

The first Act of Parliament on enclosure was carried out in 1710 but the progress was rather slow. It was only after 1760 that pace of enclosed lands picked up. Between 1750 and 1760, parliament passed 156 acts of enclosure while the number of acts on enclosure went up to 906 by 1810. According to Lis and Soly, no less than 600,000 hectares of common and waste land was enclosed between 1761 and 1815.

Historians believe that enclosures carried out by the parliamentary acts formed the most radical aspect of agrarian change in England. The process had commenced from the sixteenth century but gained speed in the eighteenth century due to the involvement of Parliament. Historians have debated the significance of enclosure movement in the socio-economic sphere. One view treats its value as a precondition for industrialization in the cities. It is also suggested that there was a distinct improvement in agrarian organizations and in animal husbandry that pushed England ahead of other European nations. The English agriculture began to meet not only the domestic demand but provided surplus for exports after 1750. Steady rise of prices and demographic growth promoted capitalist farming. Wheat exports continued to increase, with a sudden spurt in 1730s - from 109,000 CWT in 1710-19 to 116,000 CWT in 1720-29 and then jumped to 296,000 in 1730-39.

However, the advantages of enclosures should not be overestimated. It had a darker shade too. It should not be seen as the lone factor in improving agricultural

productivity. Certainly, it removed restrictions on technological progress, but it was done at the cost of rural welfare. It undermined the traditional economy and security of the small farmers. Even the small landowners and copyholders with legal property rights were eliminated under enclosure acts. Small farmers who managed to survive found it too difficult to compete with their rich neighbours in investments for land improvement. They were forced to migrate to urban centres for their lively hood. Phyllis Deane points out that the standards of food consumption deteriorated for the rural poor during the second half of the eighteenth century. The diet of small farmers was restricted to mainly bread and cheese. Enclosures had taken away their pasturage and sources of fuel and fish from the ponds, which often became the part of enclosed land. The physical appearance and social landscape also underwent a major change. The scene of large cultivators working on their fields was replaced by vast stretches of land with trim hedges demarcating their boundaries. The large estates with imposing manor houses, gardens and parks transformed the sight of the countryside.

Apart from the enclosure enactments of the eighteenth century, the agrarian revolution had some other features which led to the transformation of the agrarian structure of England. Constant use of the land caused loss of fertility and this was overcome by the practice of leaving a part of their land fallow under two or three-field system. It helped the soil to get nitrogen. Poverty among the farmers did not allow them to keep enough animals for manure. Till the late-seventeenth century, the English agriculture had remained largely traditional. Improvement in agricultural technology brought about a change in productivity. Among the first innovations that contributed to the increase of productivity was the one by Jethro Tull. His experiments proved very beneficial. He designed a horse-driven hoe and mechanical seeders which made farmers sow seeds in straight line. It also made the harvesting easier. It made farming labour-intensive and more productive. Lord Townshend demonstrated the value of growing turnips, clover and other field crops in rotation that helped the soil to retain fertility even with continuous usage. William Coke prepared several tracts on the use of field grasses, new fertilizers like oilcake and bone meal and the principles of efficient estate-management. Arthur Young popularized new agricultural ideas in his *Annales of Agriculture* in 1784. He organized competitions among the farmers and also created farmers' club. King George III was himself inspired by these ideas and established a model farm at Windsor where Merino sheep farming was introduced. Norfolk in the east came to be known for its techniques of 'high farming', while East Kent and Worcestershire developed orchards and hop fields, Sussex and Surrey specialized in geese and capons (domestic fowl).

The agrarian revolution resulted in the increase of agricultural productivity and technological advancement. Social and economic outcomes enabled the population to far exceed earlier levels and facilitated England's march to industrial dominance. Britain attained most productive agriculture in Europe, nearly 80 per cent higher than the continental average in the nineteenth century.

It is also argued by a few scholars that the increase in food supply contributed to the rapid growth of population in England and Wales from 5.5 million in 1700 to over 9 million in 1801agricultural productivity went hand in hand with decline of agricultural share in total labour force as modern methods could produce more food with less man power.Enclosures of land pushed small farmers out to become industrial workers. The new agrarian structure helped in the creation of a vast national market of agricultural goods.

By end of the eighteenth century, North-western Europe witnessed rapid growth of population. Belgium and the Netherlands had reached a high level of productivity in agriculture. After England, these were the most developed economies. By 1800, England recorded the lowest proportion of rural population of 51 per cent while Spain had 79 per cent and Italy 74 per cent. In 1700, barely 15 per cent of Europeans lived in towns though the figure varied from one country to another.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Discuss the state of agriculture in France and Germany during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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2) Write a note on the enclosure movement in England.

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11.4 DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, 1500-1800

The demographic history from the end of the fifteenth century witnessed alternations from growth, decline or stagnation to growth again, subject to regional variations. There was demographic upswing from the late-fifteenth century that lasted until the beginning of the seventeenth century. Several parts of Europe underwent a decline or stagnation during the seventeenth century. There was a sharp upward swing from the early eighteenth century. It is estimated that the population increased by 0.6 per thousand annually but it doubled between 1700 and 1850. The rate of growth had gone up to 5.3 per thousand from the seventeenth century to the end of the twentieth century. According to Paolo Malanima, the average growth during the eighteenth century was about 4 per thousand. All these figures are based on rough estimates and vary enormously with each writer and different methods of calculations. It was only from 1801 that Britain started a decade-wise census under the influence of Thomas Malthus, the famous theorist of demographic studies.

Rough Estimate of Population in Millions

Years	1700	1750	1800	1850
Belgium	1.75	2.25	3.25	4,50
Britain	5.75	6.00	9.25	18.00
France	22.00	24.00	29.00	36.00
Germany	13.00	15.00	18.00	27.00
Italy	13.00	15.00	19.00	25.00

A rough estimate of the total European population suggests that in 1600, it was 107.05 million (including Russia); in 1700, the population was 114.85 million; in 1750 it jumped to 143.23 million and in 1800, it reached 188.30 million. The population of north-western regions of Europe has grown rapidly after 1700. England and Wales had a population of 4.4 million in 1600, that increased to 5.45 million in 1700, 6.3 million (1750) and in 1800, it jumped to 9.25 million. In Netherlands, from 1.5 million in 1600, the figures went up to 1.95 million in 1700 and 2.1 million in 1700. Similarly, the population of Belgium grew from 1.3 million in 1600to 1.9 million in 1700 and then climbed to 2.9 million in 1800. The French population too increased from 18.5 million in 1600 to 21.5 million in 1700 and leaped to 29 million in 1800. In central regions, the increase was not too high. For example, in German states the population was 16.2 million in 1600, declined to 14.1 million in 1700, primarily due to Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and the general crisis of the seventeenth century, and then grew rapidly in the eighteenth century to 24.5 million in 1800. In southern Europe, the Italian population was 13.3 million in 1600 but stagnated at 13.5 in 1700, and then increased marginally during the eighteenth century to 18.1 million in 1800. The Spanish population grew moderately from 6.8 million in 1800 to 10.5 million in 1800. Although, these figures are not reliable and are based on rough estimates provided by Paolo Malanima, they provide general trends of demographic changes in pre-modern Europe. The demographic figures of central and southern Europe indicate the impact of wars and production crisis in a subsistence economy. The increasing population resulted in heavier density of population. Around 1700, the average density of Europe was 11 inhabitants per kilometre that increased nearly ten-fold. In western and central regions of Europe, the average density was about 50; in Spain, it was about 20 and in Prussia and Poland, it was nearly 14 and in Russia, with the lowest density in the region, it was merely 3 persons per kilometre.

In natural economies, the relationship of population and agriculture is crucial, as argued by Thomas Robert Malthus, the famous British theorist of population studies. *An Essay on the Principle of Population* appeared in 1798. It was a warning to the English authorities of the consequences of the rapid growth of population by stating that population grows at geometrical ratio while food production was limited to arithmetic proportion. Malthus brought out socio-demographic dynamic of pre-industrial societies. His theory suggests that growing population leads to a rising supply of labour and consequently lower wages. Continuous population rise thus leads to poverty. His arguments contributed to the passing of the Censes Act of 1800. His work ignited a controversy based on his views on population growth. The classical economists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries shared this view. More recent economic historians do not

agree with the classical approach on population and point out the influence on technological progress. They point out to the shortcomings of Malthusian simple notion of natural constraints based on population-land relationship citing the experience of Sweden and Ireland. Wrigley and Schofield have tried to present an inverse side of the Malthusian model. Yet, Malthusian principles could not be entirely discounted in context of pre-modern agrarian societies. Malthus opened gates for more advanced population theories that are better applied to post-eighteenth century.

11.5 MORTALITY – FAMINES, EPIDEMICS AND WARS

Famines and epidemics are some factors that played a decisive role in determining the size of population. Famines too, had impact on the demographic and agricultural growth throughout the seventeenth century. Economic historians have stressed upon the co relationship between famines and mortality. The pre-industrial agricultural regimes of Europe were precariously placed in the absence of technological development. Famines also caused an indirect impact on mortality. This view is also contested by many science writers. There is no doubt that poor nutrition makes a person susceptible to infection and diseases.

The critics of this viewpoint argue that in many cases like small pox, malaria, diphtheria, encephalitis and plague, there is no relationship between the nutritional diet and the probability of contacting the illness. The rise of medical science began to provide protection against diseases like smallpox. The introduction of inoculation against small pox in the late- eighteenth century by E.Jenner had a positive impact. Among the deadliest epidemics, plague was the most serious. The disease had existed in ancient times but had disappeared till the eight century. Between 1347 and 1352, plague had caused death of about one-thirds of the European population. This epidemic often broke out in different parts of Europe and it ravaged Britain in 1665-66 having death toll of nearly 70,000. Plague was disappearing from the eighteenth century after breaking out in Marseilles (1720), Ukraine (1737) and Moscow (1789). It is difficult to provide precise reasons for the disappearance of plague. Scholars have given different explanations such as preventive health and measures of hygiene, changing the material for house construction from wood to bricks and stones and keeping vigil over rats.

11.6 MARRIAGE PATTERNS – FERTILITY, BIRTH AND DEATH RATES

Demographic trends in pre-modern age were determined by the birth and death rates, which was the fundamental feature. The first stage of the Demographic Transition Model is applicable to pre-industrial societies and explains how the birth and death rates affects population growth rate. In the first stage, the high birth rate and high death rate keeps the population stable and checked. In the subsequent period, high birth rate and reduction of death rate results in rapid growth of population as had happened in the second half of the eighteenth century. The usual death rate during this period was about 35 per thousand which could rise in periods of epidemics and famine. The birth rate was higher, 1 or 2 units above infant mortality rate. The gap between the birth and death rates enabled slight increase of population. It was the mortality that was the principal device in

maintaining the population balance in relation to resources. It proved to be one of the important means of population check.

Another factor that controlled demographic growth was the marriage age of the youngsters. Late marriages reduced the period of child bearing age or decreased the female reproductive period.

Although it is not clear whether specific forms of birth control existed in pre-modern period. Some forms of birth control appear to be prevalent in some parts of Europe among the upper classes, religious minorities and urban habitants. Paolo Malanima provides evidence in the form of legal proceeding in Merzario to prove that birth control was practiced in rural France and Hungary during the eighteenth century.

In recent demographic research, experts argue that variations in birth and death rate ratio can play a decisive role in demographic changes. Fertility level is determined by fecundability and fecundity. A set of factors that affect the likelihood of a woman to reproduce if exposed to sexual intercourse without contraception, called fecundability, did not vary much during the early modern period. Much more important factor was fecundity, the physiological ability to bear children. Improvement in nutrition and health facilities resulted in the increase of fecundity. At the same time, we should keep in mind that improvements in nutritional value in food may not have affected the masses.

Apart from birth control methods, the practice of breast feeding was commonly used as a primitive type of contraception, sometimes for two-three years, thereby checking birth rate by temporary sterility in women following breast feeding. Recent works on early modern demographic trends have shown the importance of marriage age and the proportion of married men and women as mechanisms to control fertility.

In the pre-industrial societies, the population was checked as much by birth control and epidemics as by late marriage. About two per cent of the population did not marry due to religious reasons like celibacy or following the vocation of priest, nun or monks. Compared to Asian societies where everyone is supposed to marry, Europe had good number of people who did not marry. Widows and widowers rarely married. Percentage was much higher-as much as 15 to 20 among women who did not marry. Late marriage was an effective factor in constraining population growth. Several documentary studies of marriage patterns have been made of Western Europe. Compared to the Asiatic societies, the practice of marrying late was prevalent in the western regions of Europe. The marriage age differed from one region to another in pre-industrial age. It remained around 25. Before 1750, in France women married at 24.6 years of age, in England and Belgium at 25 while in Scandinavian countries it was 26.7 and in Germany it was 26.4 (according to Molanima) Demographic scholars tend agree that there was a decline in mortality rate during the eighteenth century, particularly due to the relationship between economy and population. A common belief is that during the eighteenth century, the reduction of death rate caused by famine and epidemics was the result of improved nutrition. This was the result of progress in agriculture leading to improved productivity, reducing the impact of famines. Improved diet is believed to have developed resistance against diseases. An increase in the per capita consumption of agricultural produce in England during the eighteenth century resulted in the rise of population. Scholars have disagreement with the

above-mentioned explanation which they find too simplistic. Total growth of about 50 million in the European population between 1700 and 1800 has to be explained with a wider approach.

The technology of weapons had undergone radical change from the medieval period till the French Revolution. Older versions of weapons were transformed into destructive firearms and wars were not based on personal valour but on military organization. A large number of civilians were killed in wars as had happened in the French religious wars, the Dutch revolt, Thirty Years War (1618-1648), etc., and crops were severely damaged by trampling and burning, livestock killed and vast stretches of land ravaged. The population suffered the damaging effects of these wars. Population losses were about 40 per cent in many parts of Germany and central Europe, Poland, Masovia—they all experienced negative impact of the wars.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Discuss the demographic trends in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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2) Analyse the marriage patterns in Europe in the eighteenth century.

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11.7 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit you studied:

- The vast variation in the organization of agriculture in different European countries,
- Factors that were responsible for regional variations,
- Why the north-western regions of Europe succeeded in transforming agriculture on capitalist lines and the importance of commercial practices,
- How the English agrarian transformed the entire economy resulting in the establishment of capitalist structure,
- A close relationship existed between demographic trends and pre-modern agrarian economy, and
- How variables like birth and death rates, fertility, marriages determine the trends in demography and the nature of changes during the eighteenth century.

11.8 KEY WORDS

Celibacy : To lead an unmarried life without sex for religious reasons.

Enclosure : Enclosing common land by planting hedges for personal use by landlords.

Fertility : Reproductive capacity.

Junkers : Nobles of the Prussian provinces who dominated the higher posts in bureaucracy and officer corps.

lods and ventes : Dues on property transfers.

Physiocrats : A set of writers in the eighteenth century who advocated the destruction of seigneurial regime and develop modern agriculture based on property-relations.

Seigneur : The French feudal lord enjoying social and economic privileges.

Taille : A direct tax on agricultural produce and sometimes on property.

11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) See Sub-section 11.2.1 and 11.2.2
2) See Section 11.3

Check Your Progress 2

1) See Section 11.4
2) See Section 11.6

UNIT 12 THE PATTERNS OF CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION*

Structure

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will understand the following aspects of consumption and production in the Early Modern Europe:

- notion of the 'industrious' revolution and its critical appraisal,
- role of European marriage pattern and its impact on nature of economy,
- concept of proto-industrialization and its evaluation; and
- nature of literacy, book-production and human capital formation.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

In traditional history, Industrial Revolution was regarded the most important event. However, the recent researches has made it clear that this 'revolution' was not a abrupt surge in the tempo of economic growth, but a gradual stepping up of growth, which cannot really be characterized as a clear 'revolution'. 'Proto-industry' – rural, small-scale industries in which the labour force combined agricultural activities with industrial work for the world market – was discovered as an engine of industrial and demographic growth that had preceded the industrial change. The early modern period in Europe especially in the Western Part bordering the North Sea was not a stagnant period but as a dynamic one that led to a significant increase in urbanization, rapid growth in long-distance trade and finance, and increased output and productivity in the agricultural sector. Similarly, our understanding of how early modern people consumed, why consumed particular commodities and how this consumption impacted the society, has also changed. Earlier Marxist scholars naturally favoured the preponderance of production over consumption. It was believed that changes in consumption tend to follow those in production, commerce and technology. Now many scholars feel that consumption and its pattern were crucial for the socio-economic and cultural changes in the early modern Low Countries. The most important argument

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is that the growth of a 'consumer society' in the early modern Low Countries would have facilitated the development of 'industriousness', that might have resulted in economic growth and eventual industrial growth across Western Europe.

12.2 THE 'INDUSTRIOUS REVOLUTION'

Jan de Vries postulated an 'industrious revolution' that came before the onset of the industrial revolution. This view has become one of the most significant for re-examining the early modern European economic history. In 1975 De Vries' hypothesis was based on the consumption pattern of early modern peasants in Friesland in Holland. He argued that these peasants had the capacity to demand more goods and commodities and their increased purchasing power made it possible for them to consume more and more household commodities. He found the proof of it in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He saw that the curtains for windows and mantel cloths were slowly used in peasant households. They started using different kinds of tables and chairs, new type of glasses, tin and pottery. They more frequently used table and kitchenware, and use of mirrors, clocks and books in peasant households became common. Although from the standpoint of individual peasant there was nothing revolutionary in these changes but if we take them together they demonstrate a slow and steady adoption of consumption behaviour of urban people or imitation of their cultural practices. The end result of all these was a different style of consumption in Dutch rural hinterlands. In his subsequent writings, De Vries again stressed that because of the increased consumption levels of the peasants, the nature of the household economy also got changed and this helped in development of proto-industries. Due to more supply of consumer goods in the market, households had to rethink about their economic strategies of how to re-allocate their resources and labour according to the prevailing conditions of the market. Peasant households now more and more began to produce for the market. They also became more dependent on the market for their own consumption needs All this resulted in the greater specialization and the division of labour. The ultimate result of this was more productive use of resources and higher production also meant lower relative prices of available goods and commodities. Thus, according to De Vries' view, it was the changes in consumer desires and demand particularly – 'the search for comfort, pleasure, novelty and identity' that define the 'active searching consumer' of his 'industrious revolution'. It was a drastic change that took place before the onset of the industrial revolution and subsequently led to large scale industrial production on factory lines. These slow and steady changes towards the Industrial Revolution were helped by certain economic trends such as growth of consumer demand. This manifested in the surge of consumerism, which involved demand for more and more new goods, and according to De Vries, this was what actually transpired in seventeenth century in Holland and England due to 'industriousness'. During the first half of the seventeenth century the spread of use of long-lasting and out of the ordinary goods paved the way for new needs and demands which the peasant households could only acquire by increasing their income levels. For a peasant household this meant three things:

1) they worked harder and more consistently and the process has been acknowledged as labour intensification;
2) they worked for longer hours (labour prolongation); and

3) they sold and/or bought labour in market more often, thereby increasing their participation in the labour markets (labour amplification).

12.3 THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN MARRIAGE PATTERN

Women played a significant role in 'Industrious Revolution', it is argued. A growing desire for market goods motivated households and especially women to re-allocate time from leisure and household production to income-earning work. Some scholars have argued that a new marriage pattern emerged in Europe in late Medieval and early Modern period which facilitated this. In the European Marriage Pattern women had more choice in choosing their life-partner and it was based entirely on the consent of a boy and a girl for marriage. The position of children, in particular when they started to contribute to the income of the household, was also relatively strong. Another feature of this pattern of marriage was that late marriages became common as a girl had to choose her own husband and establish her own household with a steady income. There was possibility of some girls remaining unmarried. The European Marriage Pattern was a new institutional adaptation of marriage or more generally of human reproductive behaviour in a period to get a job and when wages levels were generally high for about a century after the high mortality in the epidemic that is popularly known as the Black Death. In brief, in these circumstances when wage earnings were rather high, marriage patterns also started to change. The relationship between consenting marriage partners changed and it was influenced by market forces especially as the development of labour markets gained significance. The wage income component become important for household income. Not only labour markets were expanding but these households of wage earners also had right of entry to capital markets and to buy consumer goods from the accessible nearby markets. At the same time, they developed new mechanisms for long-term survival to adapt their life to new conditions and enhance chances for their children to utilize opportunities made available by emergence of markets all around. Compared to earlier times when nobody cared too much for schooling and training, now even families with modest means started to invest more in formal schooling of their children. They also made use of training facilities as apprentices or as servants in other households. Why people invest more in acquiring 'social capital'? In new marriage system, the traditional ties of extended larger families started to break and people had to adapt to solve the problems attendant on old age or single parenthood. So such investment in education and training would help them in improving their chances to earn more. This societal restructuring was taking place and making way for a remodeled society in the late Middle Ages in the North Sea region, in England and the Low Countries in particular.

In the North Sea region, compared to earlier period, wages were higher after the Black Death, and one can easily make use of expanding labour market for getting a job, although women were still at a serious trouble in the labour force compared to men. In this context, European Marriage Pattern emerged in the late medieval period. These catalysts were: the values taught by the Catholic Church, the manner in which resources were transferred among generation through family inheritance, creation of labour-markets due to employment of people for a wage outside the household, and the socio-economic impact of the Black Death. The power and authority of parents over their children and of men over women declined in the new marriage system that evolved in Europe in these circumstances. The emerging

commercial activities and market for labour and products also facilitated the emergence of this so called 'European Marriage Pattern' The families became small and nuclear with only husband, wife and children and it became dependent on wage labour mostly. Use of credit markets and attempt to save some money for rainy day became essential to survival for people. The changes in nature and structure population, its employment, division of labour and creation of labour and credit markets went hand in hand. This was both the outcome and consequence of growing commercialization of economy and society in this age. It is estimated that a large number of people (about one-third to two-thirds of the population) became (to some extent) earned their livings through wage labour, and earning livelihood in this manner become a normal thing of life and its conditions. The extraordinary expansion of markets in late medieval and early modern Europe, especially in the area around the North Sea, should be seen in this light. The emergence of the 'European Marriage Pattern' had important other long-term effects. Transfer of income and resources between generations changed radically as a result of this new marriage system. Firstly, the younger people stood to gain because their parents now invested more in them so as to increase their value, in other words, parents were making increased investment in what we nowadays call the 'human capital.' Secondly, to some degree the 'European Marriage Pattern' increased the age of marriage and thereby restricted the number of children one could have in a short life-span of those times. With fewer children, parents invested more to improve their chances in life through their education and training. 'Investment in human capital' through formal schooling and on the job training was a new experience now the life cycle of young men and women, which must also have delayed their entering the marriage market. Thus, instead of being backward-looking, i.e. taking care of the lineage and the older dependent parents, the household became progressive in the sense that they began to invest in children more and more. The older people in such households, however, were probably the most important sufferers of the new demographic and social change. The power and authority of the older members of the household was diluted. They used to get some resources in older type of arranged marriages system but now when marriage became a more or less free choice between two consenting adults, this source of their older patriarchal privilege disappeared. It was possible for them to save from their earnings which were now relatively good due to higher wages and this could have offered them some safety. Some people feel that there may be some correlation between the emergence of the 'European Marriage Pattern' and the emergence of capital markets in Western Europe in the late medieval period. Now people might have started saving money for old-age security and investing that in newly emerging joint stock companies. The new marriage pattern, however, posed a new social security risk because as the households became smaller, there was more likelihood it's collapse if one of the parents died prematurely. So side by side, new social arrangements emerged that offered some degree of social security for the aged, the children, and the disabled. We may say that the 'industrious revolution' was a result of many social and economic changes that materialized during the late medieval period. The early modern period saw changes in the orientation of households that took advantage of the market opportunities, which resulted in an increased labour supply. Jan de Varies believes these changes preceded the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century, and he argues that women's and teenagers' labour was a key to understand the economic changes that occurred in the North sea region. The so called 'Dutch Golden Age' of the seventeenth century was created by this economic transformation. Increased employment of women and children

through labour markets, higher level of investment in education and training , and the general development of labour and capital markets were obviously associated with the appearance of the 'European Marriage Pattern'.

12.4 EVALUATION OF 'INDUSTRIOUSNESS'

It is important to note here that De Vries rejected the model of 'social-emulation' which is based on the hypothesis that consumption patterns of a higher social group or class reflected in tastes or needs, are transferred from and imitated by one social class to another. This poses the question that how these new consumption desires emerged suddenly in the seventeenth century and how industriousness was able to destroy idleness or traditional leisure time of the workers? Since there is no evidence of any mass diffusion of new tastes and new luxury commodities among general population before industrial revolution, De Vries bases his story and especially its time-line of its evolution on less sound empirical evidence, but it has been woven around the moral arguments, philosophical conjectures, and prevalent political economic thinking and observations by contemporary writers. In other words, there is hardly any material evidence to demonstrate the time-line of an actual 'industrious-consumer revolution', so he prefers to give many kind of literary evidences. These literary evidences only show changes in the connotations of sumptuousness, industriousness and idleness. They cannot be taken as the proofs of an abrupt and sudden change in the nature and intensity of consumption. Several studies exist on the late medieval and sixteenth-century commercial exchanges and articles and goods that were in domestic possessions. They are indicative of a notable increase of domestic sumptuous consumption in England, the so-called 'Low Countries', and even in Ireland and Denmark. This preceded what was later described as the 'consumer revolution'. But the evidence for penetration of consumerist behaviour among the lower classes and social strata is very thin. This was reasonable because there is historical evidence that shows that wages were declining in real terms and this trend persisted throughout most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Western Europe. Jan de Vries' 'industrious revolution' provides us with a different explanation. In his view, fall in wages in real terms went alongside simultaneous increase in the level of consumption especially among the lower social classes. In order to reconcile these rather contradictory trends, he argues for a simultaneously growing input and intensification of labour. Other scholars have argued against him on the ground that for English rural poor labourers, the so called 'industrious revolution' might have meant more economic hardships rather than an increase of consumption level. There was also a prolonged economic stagnation after the commercial revolution of sixteenth century in Europe. Some little research has been done on probate inventories to investigate consumption standards. But they have not been very useful in providing information on the living standards of the lower social groups in early modern society. This is so because such inventories provide more information about the consumption of relatively better off social groups and classes. These classes were literate and make such inventories of their articles of consumption whereas we hardly find existence and survival of inventories. So the evidence of consumption level investigated through inventories is more skewed towards the middle social groups and higher classes. Therefore, scholars of inventories did not make any tall claims about change of consumer behaviour with regard to the lower social strata. Some scholars, however, still believe that

the change in the behaviour of consumers was more extensive and it occurred among the poor labouring classes too. But it can be safely said that there is a very little confirmation of the expansion of consumption among the lower social groups of society before the industrial revolution and corroborating evidence for it is lacking.

The ideas emanating from the 'industrious revolution' and the 'consumer revolution' both questioned the notion of a fixed working year for the labourers. They imagine an increase in the number of days worked per year as people earned surplus money to buy novel consumer goods like tea, sugar, books, and clocks. If the working year increased in this way, then labour inputs increased more rapidly than the population, leading this way to economic growth in pre modern period. In contrast to the usual approach in the real wage literature, which assumes that the working year was constant and then computes how much annual consumption changed as wages and prices varied, Robert C. Allen and Jacob L. Weisdorf (2010) in an empirical study of England workers between 1300-1830 assumed that workers acted to stabilize consumption over time and compute how much the working year had to change in order to achieve that given changes in wages and prices. Specifically, they used an analytical tool which they called 'a basket of basic consumption goods' and compute the working year of rural and urban day labourers on the basis of number of days required to work if they wished to buy commodities in that basket. They compared their result with independent estimates of the actual working year and found that there were two examples of 'industrious' revolutions among rural workers. In their analysis, however, these were results of economic hardships, and there was no indication of any 'consumer revolution'. In comparison to rural labourers, however, the evidence for urban labourers was different. Here, they saw that there was a widening gap between their actual working year and the number of days they were required to work to buy the basket. So in urban areas, there was more scope for a consumer revolution. The study was conducted for two groups of day labourers: farm workers in southern England and London building workers. For farm labourers, the work required to buy the basket agrees reasonably well with independent estimates of the actual working year. Since the consumption basket they used contained no novelties (no sugar, tobacco, tea, coffee etc), but only daily consumption goods that were readily available in early modern England, the fact that they largely match the actual working year suggests that something like a consumer revolution did not take place among pre-industrial farm workers. For London building workers, by contrast, a large and widening gap between their actual working year and the number of days they worked in order to buy the basket suggests that there was large possibility for a consumer revolution in the run up to the industrial revolution, harmonious with the notion of the 'industrious' revolution and the 'consumer revolution'. The empirical exercise carried out in this study also provided other insights into the work-patterns of pre-industrial day labourers. For farm workers, they found two episodes of steep increase in work-requirements: one between 1540 and 1616, and another between 1750 and 1818. The initial upsurge in labour input coincides with the removal of 49 holy days in England, conducted in 1536 as part of the Protestant Reformation. If this abolition of holy days was intended to help the poor maintaining their consumption by allowing them to work more days throughout the year, then it might have helped also more affluent groups of workers, such as urban labourers, to realize a higher desired consumption level, which in turn could have been a stimulus to the manufacturing sector. The apparent industriousness among farm labourers in

their study, though supporting the idea of households supplying more labour over time, does not seem consistent with a consumer revolution marked by more and new goods entering their consumption basket. Rather, additional labour input of farm workers stems from the fact that daily consumption goods become harder to obtain economically. Between 1500 and 1616, days of work required per year to obtain same basket of goods increased from around 160 to slightly more than 300 for the farm workers.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What do understand by term 'industrious revolution'? Critically evaluate its impact on economy and society in Early Modern Europe.

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2) Analyse the role of 'European Marriage Pattern' in economic and social life of Early Modern Europe.

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12.5 PROTO-INDUSTRIALIZATION IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

Proto-industrialization was a notion that indicated the growth of domestic industries that produced goods and commodities for distant markets. The development of such industries was noticed in many regions of Europe between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries. These so called 'proto-industries' mostly grew in the rural areas and they co-existed and were developed alongside agriculture. They did not use any advanced technology. The labour force was also not centralized in the form of factory-production in such industries. This extensive industrial growth in domestic domain in early modern Europe evinced considerable interests although it was also a controversial theme. But in the 1970s, interest in the study of this theme was re-kindled and researchers focused attention on 'proto-industry'. This became one of the explanations behind the transition from feudalism to capitalism and emergence of factory industrialization.

Franklin Mendels was first to use the term 'proto-industrialization' in his 1969 dissertation on the Flemish linen industry (published in 1981) and he published a famous article based on that research. His argument was that development of 'proto-industry' led to population growth. This demographic change in population led to further expansion of proto-industry to expand further, creating a kind of

self-sustaining development. Mendels argued that this sustained growth in domestic industry led to many of the economic changes viewed as essential for factory production such as commercialization of agriculture, accumulation of capital, growth of entrepreneurship, capture of overseas markets, and creation of an industrial workforce. Mendels claimed that 'proto-industrialization' was the beginning of industrialization. In the 18th century, like all pre-modern agrarian societies, agricultural operations were seasonal and such an agriculture created seasonal underemployment for rural people in Europe. But what was new was that now many rural people started producing through domestic crafts and they also started to export their produced goods to distant markets, far beyond their immediate markets and regions. As a result of this change, traditional urban institutions such as guilds that had previously limited industrial growth, began to lose relevance and began to disappear. This process simultaneously undermined rural institutions such as inheritance systems, communes, and manorial systems. In the traditional society, population growth and economic resources had a different kind of balance and equilibrium. Now that balance was disrupted. In 1974, David Levine also stressed the role of demographic change in the form of population as a result of development of proto-industry. He argued for role of these developments for the creation a wage-dependent 'proletariat' for industrial capitalism. In 1976 Joel Mokyr, while rejecting most of these arguments, claimed that proto-industry in the traditional sector created a pool of cheap surplus labour for the modern sector. Finally, in 1977, three German historians, Peter Kriedte, Hans Medick, and Jurgen Schlumbohm, shifted the focus away from industrialization, arguing that proto-industry broke down the demographic, economic, social, and cultural obstacles in traditional European society to the development of capitalism and modern industry. Initially there were only two major empirical studies on the topic Mendels' study of eighteenth-century Flanders, and Levine's of nineteenth-century Leicestershire.

Deyon and Mendels enlisted four main effects of proto-industrialization. Firstly, growth of 'proto-industries' stimulated population growth and culminated in land fragmentation as a result of undermining of traditional control by communes, landlords and inheritance systems over the rural populations. Secondly, profits earned in 'proto-industrial' production also helped in the accumulation of the capital for factory industrialization. Thirdly, 'proto-industries' trained traders and workers in the entrepreneurial skills that were prerequisite for factory industrialization. Lastly, proto-industrialization was a catalyst for agriculture and encouraged commercialization, Without a huge markets for agricultural goods, it would have been impossible to sustain urbanization and industrialization on a permanent basis. This is how proto-industry paved the way for factory industry – although the authors admitted that sometimes it had opposite effect of destruction of industries also.

12.6 CRITIQUE OF THE THEORIES OF PROTO-INDUSTRIALIZATION

The theories of proto-industrialization have been criticized on several grounds by the scholars. First problem with theory is that exact regional size and nature of a production unit is not precisely defined. Proto-industries may vary in their regional expanse and often went beyond economic zone of a single market town, or on the other hand they involved production by limited number of people of

only one or two communities situated in a specific area. In this sense, we can define the area of a particular proto-industry as a geographical area where people were engaged in production of commodities for sale in distant markets. But this appears to be very vague and ambiguous definition without analytical rigour. Secondly, scholars do not have consensus on the issue of the percentage of employment of labour of a particular area that must have been employed in non-agricultural field to define it as proto-industrial zone. There is no clarity also about the change in intensity and quantity of labour employment in the industrial production, sustainability of such a labour force in that particular economic activity in order to qualify as it as a case of 'proto-industrialization'. The implication of export markets for proto-industrialization is also problematic. Can 'proto-industrialization' sustain itself without existence of stable export markets or whether the export markets are absolutely essential for proto-industries to develop or what fraction of total industrial production need to be exported to designate it as a 'proto-industry'? Then what should be location of the export markets and their distance from the 'proto-industrial' zone to characterize them as 'supra-regional' or export- market rather than 'local'? These questions remained unanswered. The differentiation between local crafts and export-oriented 'proto-industries' remained a bone of contention among proponents of theory. The analytical rigour in such categories was too obvious to be ignored. The theory of 'proto-industrialization' also ignored other types of industrial production. The pre-industrial manufacturing was not solely based on cottage industry. The technology used in 'Proto-Industry' based on craft-production was rather of primitive variety. The centralized manufactories based on more technologically advanced crafts that employed skilled workers and was based in urban centres and was producing for export also existed in pre-industrial early modern period. Some historians have argued that pre-industrial manufacturing existed in diverse forms and that all type of industrial production should be considered for analysing the impact of industrial production on the economy before the onset of Industrial Revolution. Others argued that large urban-based export industries working in the putting-out system, and more sophisticated centralized industrial units, should also be added to the quantity of industrial production. The ignoring of technological factors and role of physical geography in sustaining various kinds of pre-industrial production was another major criticism. Mendels made a momentary reference to minimum inputs needed to produce a specific output (what contemporary economists call as the 'production-function') and significance of transport costs, but the role of these factors in details remained an unexplored territory. In short, Critics pointed out underplaying of role of technological, geographical, and institutional factors.

The theories had a prejudiced view about the 'traditional societies' in which changes were introduced by the growth of proto-industry, and these pre-conceptions were challenged. The 'Proto-industrialization' hypothesis borrowed uncritically from the ideas of Alexander Chayanov. Chayanov regardeded peasants as irrational human beings that were hardly able to calculate economic variables like costs and profits. Their use of money or transactions in markets were not based on rational approach. But this perception of peasant and other non-agrarian producers of early modern period were not based on any verifiable empirical study. The subsistence orientation of the rural producers and consumers has been taken for granted. The peasants and even the proto-industrial workers were simultaneously engaged in a number of multiple roles such as traders, middlemen, putters-out, and sometimes as manufacturers. The economic decisions and

productive choices of pre-modern producers was changing due to demographic and economic factors, their viewpoints and perception were subject to change and they were not dominated by unchanging, immutable 'traditional mentalities'. The social changes around them compelled them to think in terms of economic calculations. Their decisions began to be guided and governed by rational-economic choices and they also felt the impact of market-forces. The demographic predictions of the theories were also found to be fallacious as more and more empirical studies poured in on the subject. Similarly, the impact of 'proto-industry' was also not uniform and it varied according to class, gender, region and other demographic factors. Its impact was vastly different on demographic variables like marriages, fertility, mortality and migration across the European societies. It had been postulated that all regions that experienced growth of 'proto-industries' also experienced increase in population, in terms of absolute numbers and higher density per unit area, and they demonstrate lowering of marriageable age, and an increase in fertility rates etc. The actual empirical studies, however, exhibited wide range of variations. Moreover, there was no direct correlation between these demographic changes and the growth of 'proto-industry'. The relationship postulated between commercialization of agriculture and 'proto-industry' was also uncertain. The agrarian relations in the areas of 'proto-industries' also have no homogeneity . The areas varied from subsistence cultivation to market centred commercial farming, and large chunk of areas that were still under feudal domination and were worked by serf labour. The craftsmen in Proto-industries were in many cases dependent partly on agriculture too. They were not simply consumers of agricultural produce like urban workers. The degree of survival of the traditional agrarian institutions and rural social structure also showed difference across regions. In some, they start to crumble but in others they continued to exist unaffected for much longer. So, the role of socio-political structures and institutions has also been positively amended. The stability and continuity of 'traditional' social structure and gradual penetration of markets in now acknowledged. Scholars now believe in the persistence of structures associated with guilds and their privileges, village communities and manorial institutions etc. for a much longer period. A final major criticism questioned the role of proto-industry in paving the way for factory production industrialization or as acting as a pre-cursor to industrial revolution.

12.7 BOOK PRODUCTION, LITERACY AND HUMAN CAPITAL FORMATION

In the late Middle Ages, the North Sea area already had encouraging conditions for investment in human capital, both in craftsmen's skills and in overall literacy (and probably general education). At the same time, during the fifteenth century, a revolution in the way knowledge was reproduced resulted in a very sharp decline in book prices, which in turn gave strong positive feedback to the production and reproduction of 'academic' knowledge. Book output increased enormously in the decades and centuries after 1455. Then there was a new system of spreading information already in existence. Two of the key events which defined the beginning of the early modern period were linked to ideas. The first was technological: the development of printing using type. Ideas had been circulating in manuscript for centuries, but the printing press provided an additional means of reproducing texts in very large numbers. Books were produced in both cheap and expensive editions. The production of cheap editions, coupled with the

increasing numbers of people who were able to read and write meant that people from across society were reading – the rich, the middling and even some working people had access to books and ideas. Printing affected all areas of life. For example, the availability of cheap books would have had a big impact on religion and culture. For the spread of the Protestant ideas, books and pamphlets were crucial. Reading and writing had existed in the European Middle Ages and Asian Empires but they remained restricted activities, largely limited to the clergy and the medieval scribes' who tirelessly copied and re-copied. Literacy remained an elite privilege, and until 1500 CE, most likely not more than 10% of the world population could read or write. What changed then, in the Early Modern West, of course, was the arrival of Gutenberg's printing press and movable type. Until Gutenberg's invention, the only way to reproduce text was copying by hand, a laborious task. The printing press made books a mass commodity, and for precisely that reason, literacy became a mass phenomenon. The social history of 'Book' has been traced by Roger Chartier. Standardized typefaces made reading an easier activity, because readers no longer had to deal with the idiosyncrasies of another person's handwriting. The errors so frequently made by scribal copyists were eliminated, and thus thousands of people could have access to the same, presumably error-free "standard edition" of a text. This introduced new modes of production, transmission and reception of written word. Although measuring literacy in pre-industrial societies and early modern Europe is a daunting task, but spread of literacy cannot be doubted. The geography of literacy indicate higher literacy in North and North-West Europe, however, there were inequalities across gender, occupations and estates. Literacy was predominantly linked to a person's work and status.

Finally, the gap between common workmen and those engaged in mental labour and intellectual pursuits was bridged by the marked rise in literacy in the same region; this process probably began in the Low Countries (and northern France, and perhaps parts of Germany and Italy as well) during the one-and a-half centuries after the Black Death, and spread to England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At the end of the period, almost all skilled craftsmen in the North Sea region were probably literate; they were definitely able to read and write in the Low Countries, and increasingly so in Great Britain, Germany, and France. Efficient training institutions produced relatively high levels of human capital formation. The falling book prices and increase in literacy went hand in hand. The revolution in printing had a number of other socio-economic consequences. Several new roles emerged in society and the economy: 1) the intellectual, who lived from his pen, i.e. from the proceeds of his books (Erasmus was perhaps the first example), and 2) the publisher/printer, who often played a key role in bringing academics together, in commissioning new books, and developing new projects. The invention of the newspaper and the journal came later.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Was proto-industrialization a precursor of Industrial Revolution? Explain your position in detail.

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2) Briefly discuss the nature of book-production.

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12.8 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have basically demonstrated how the underpinning changes that led to rise of industrial production in the form of modern factory system were gradually gathering pace since the beginning of Early Modern Europe in what are commonly known as the Low Countries. The consumption and production patterns have respectively conceptualized as the 'industrious revolution' and 'proto-industrialization' by some scholars. These are conceptually controversial topics in history. The empirical proofs are also not conclusive despite large academic investment in the field. But one thing is certain that some divergence was visible in the society and economy of countries bordering the North Sea when compared to the rest of the world economy. The consumption and production patterns and development of institutions are indicators of this divergence.

12.9 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) See Sections 12.2 and 12.4

2) See Section 12.3

Check Your Progress 2

1) See Sections 12.5 and 12.6

2) See Section 12.7

UNIT 13 PATTERNS OF TRADE, COLONIALISM AND DIVERGENCE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY*

Structure

13.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will understand the followings:

- nature of trade between Europe and colonies,
- role of colonial trade in emergence of capitalism,
- conditions for the rise of industrial capitalism, and
- various viewpoints on the existence and nature of difference of conditions between Europe and the rest of the world.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

After the discovery and colonization of the Americas by the Spanish and Portuguese a huge expansion of world trade took place. By the eighteenth century the Dutch, British and French had become the dominant naval, mercantile and colonial powers. Trade and colonial expansion, supported by mercantilist policies of the European states, was spearheaded by trading companies that are regarded as the world's first multinational companies. According to the mainstream European account it was in the period between 1500 and 1800 that the conditions for the industrial revolution in Europe emerged. These conditions were not present elsewhere and led to European ascendancy in the world. A grand narrative of the Rise of the West, dominant in the late 20th century, was critiqued by Kenneth

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Pomeranz in *The Great Divergence* in the year 2000. He made a strong case that the difference between Europe and China only emerged in the eighteenth century. Third world nationalists, Marxists, dependency school advocates and critics of imperial expansion have emphasized the role of colonialism in the rise of European capitalism and the Great Divergence. Several scholars like Jan de Vries, Wrigley, O'Brien, Mokyr and Allen have highlighted endogenous developments in Britain and Europe – the emergence of agrarian capitalism, the industrial changes, appropriate fiscal policies, substitution of wood by coal and the relative prices of labour and capital. As some scholars like Prasannan Parthasarthy have discovered the elements of capitalism and dynamism in the economies of China and India before the 18th century, the divergence debate still rages.

13.2 EUROPEAN TRADE AND THE AMERICAS

Adam Smith wrote in *The Wealth of Nations* that "the discovery of America and that of a passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope are the two greatest and most important events recorded in the history of mankind." The Spanish Empire brought in silver, gold, new crops and commodities into Europe. The demand for cheap labour in the West Indies, the southern colonies of America, in Cuba and in Brazil led to a flourishing slave trade. In the southern parts of America after 1700 African slaves constituted nearly two-fifths of the total population. Slave-based production of sugar in the West Indies was vital to the Spanish, French and British for more than a century. Some scholars have highlighted the contribution of the West Indies to the initial accumulation of capital needed for the British industrial revolution. The expansion of cotton cultivation in the southern states of America contributed to the rise of capitalism in Britain and America. Approximately half of all slaves - 46 percent- sold to the Americas between 1492 and 1888 arrived there in the years after 1780 as the British industrial revolution took off.

Many contemporaries in the 18th century thought that the French were better placed than the British in the 1760s and 1770s in the colonies. Saint Domingue was one of the richest regions of the world until the revolution in Haiti struck a blow. Together with the French revolution of 1789 it put back the growth of France by several decades. The eventual success of the British was based on the successful use of the Navigation Acts of the mid-17th century to monopolize the trade with its colonies. The British consumer had to pay a price for this mercantilist policy but it gave a competitive edge to British shipping. Mercantilist policies strengthened British naval and maritime power. Adam Smith felt that the British attached greater value to defense than material gains. The Spanish and the Portuguese lost their initial advantage although Cuba remained one of the most important producers of sugar. The Dutch were militarily weak and focused on commercial success in the Americas although they were able to establish their dominion in Indonesia. The French, who were the biggest rivals of the British, were eventually edged out by the early nineteenth century.

Of the 6,658,400 slaves imported by the European colonizers between 1451 and 1790 only 802,800 black slaves were shipped to Spanish America constituting about twelve percent of the total. In Mexico and Peru, with substantial Indian populations, their role was much less important and they worked as domestic labour and artisans in the towns. In the lower lying and coastal areas slaves were more important because in these regions Amerindians had perished in large

numbers. Slave based plantations producing sugar, rice, cotton and cocoa emerged in Columbia, Venezuela and Guatemala in the second half of the eighteenth century but were in decline in the 19th century. About five million slaves were exported from West Africa in the 18th century. Since the 16th century, the combined force of armed European capitalists and European states created war capitalism which led to Industrial Revolution. The state had to create and protect global markets, as well as to create and enforce private property rights in land. It had to enforce contracts over large distances, tax populations, and build a framework that could mobilize labor through wage payments.

It has been estimated that over fifty one thousand metric tons of silver reached Europe between 1493 and 1700 constituting 81 percent of the world stock. This inflow of silver into Spain benefitted other European countries, particularly Netherlands and Britain, more than Spain. The silver was used to buy textiles from India, spices from Indonesia and tea and silk from China. These products were re-exported and increased consumption levels in Europe. Imported textiles from India were also used to pay for slaves in West Africa. The indigenous African states had the practice of enslaving their enemies but these slaves could rise in social life by serving in the armies or administration. In Africa rulers sought to enhance their power by accumulating slaves rather than land since there was a quasi-communal control over land. Over time firearms were used to pay for the slaves and this created the basis for more militarized states in the region. Thereafter more and more slaves from the interior were captured by these militarized states in order to pay for the firearms. The increasing demand for slaves in the Americas in the 18th century was met by the slave traders who benefitted from the competition between militarized African states. The silver from the Americas also expanded trade with India and China which would otherwise not have been so eager to trade with the European companies. It has been argued that output of silver expanded in the Americas because of the great demand for silver in China.

13.3 TRADE AND COLONIALISM IN ASIA

In Asia the European trading companies grew substantially in the eighteenth century not only in South Asia but also in South East Asia. According to K. N. Chaudhuri the European demand for Indian textiles – cotton and silk – stimulated the growth of artisanal production in the coastal regions of India from the late seventeenth century onwards. Scholars like Christopher Bayly have argued that European demand for Indian commodities encouraged both artisanal production and commercialization of agriculture contributing to the dynamism of the Indian economy in the eighteenth century. As there was little demand for European goods in India imports from India had to be paid for in precious metals and silver. Bullion stimulated the Indian economy and led to charges of a drain of wealth to India by the critics of the East India Company in Britain. Several revisionist scholars have argued that even after the British victory in the Battle of Plassey in 1757 the economy of Bengal did not suffer a significant decline.

On the other hand, other historians like Irfan Habib and Sushil Chaudhuri have observed that the East India Company acquired control over the revenue of Bengal after it was granted the Diwani by the Mughal Emperor in 1765. Therefore the British no longer needed to import treasure after 1765 and could transfer large quantities to Britain. This constituted a substantial proportion of the capital required in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. War and

conquest, utilization of Indian soldiers and resources, usually in alliance with some Indian power, helped the British establish their dominion in India. The ascendancy of the East India Company in eastern and southern India by the end of the eighteenth century promoted British trade and led to the drain of wealth from India. By creating monopolies to buy commodities like opium and salt-petre the British increased both income and power. The forced cultivation of opium yielded high profits and exporting opium to China also helped to pay for the tea and silk that Britain was importing from there. This was the triangular trade that used Indian opium to reduce the outflow of silver to China. The revenue surplus was also used to remit money to Britain by financing the purchase of goods for sale in Britain.

The trade of the European countries with America and Asia grew at about one percent per annum for over three centuries up to 1800. As west European GDP grew at 0.4% per annum between 1500 and 1820, ratios of inter-continental trade to GDP were evidently rising. Urbanization and GDP in England, France, the Netherlands and Spain involved in the Atlantic trade grew faster than in the other European countries between 1500 and 1800. In Spain the inflow of resources strengthened absolutist rule and damaged the competitiveness of the manufacturing sector. In France the net reinvested profits from overseas trade between 1715 and 1790 amounted to 7% of French GDP per capita growth. Assuming that overseas profits stimulated investment throughout the economy they might have been "responsible for as much as one-third of French growth." *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Volume I* has cited O'Brien's estimate of 1982 that the periphery contributed only 15% of British gross investment in the period 1784-1786. But the authors also point out that Britain's domestic market was not as large as that of China and India and the country was dependent on rising exports for its industrial goods. As it was, increases in exports were equivalent to 21 percent of the total increase in GDP between 1780 and 1801, over 50 percent of additional industrial output during the same period, and over 60 percent of additional textiles output between 1815 and 1841. Furthermore, between 1780 and 1801 the Americas accounted for roughly 60 percent of additional British exports. Therefore colonial markets played a necessary but not sufficient role in accounting for the rise of Britain.

13.4 COLONIES AND CAPITALISM

The colonial world provided capital to the European economies for industrialization, access to raw materials and markets for manufactured goods. Imports of cheap food also improved living standards. Irfan Habib estimated that the tribute from India contributed nearly 30 percent of the total national savings transformed into capital in Britain around 1800. This was based on the calculation of tribute from India at around two percent of national income and the rate of capital formation at around seven percent of national income. Utsa Patnaik has estimated the tribute from the colonies at six percent of Britain's GDP in 1801 amounting to 46.36% of the gross capital formation in that year. According to Habib the money received as unrequited imports could have been subsequently invested in industry even if it was initially in the hands of planters and nabobs.

According to one estimate, slave profits in 1770 constituted 0.5% of Britain's national income, about 8% of total investment and 39% of commercial and

industrial investments. Income from colonial properties was an important factor in reducing the interest rates in Britain during the 18th century. The import of cheap cotton from American slave plantations enabled Britain to sell its textile products in West Africa and to the plantation slaves in the Americas. The colonial market for British manufactures was a significant factor in the rise of the British textile industry. During the period 1750-1800 colonial trade constituted 15% of Britain's national income. Without the advantages provided by slave based plantations the British textile industry would not have been able to compete with Indian textiles in the 18th century. Further, the import of commodities like sugar, tobacco and coffee raised the levels of consumption and the standard of living in Britain. It also provided incentives to produce more efficiently. The building of port cities like Liverpool and Bristol and cotton manufacturing centres like Manchester are linked to the slave trade and plantations. Banks like Barclays and Lloyds developed out of the profits of slavery or the slave trade and later helped to finance industries.

The flow of resources from the colonies to the metropolis was important at various levels for all the colonial powers. While the dominant view is that the Spanish exploited their colonies ruthlessly recent work has pointed out that there were substantial transfers from one Spanish colony to another. It has been estimated that the loss suffered by Spain in the early 19th century because of the independence of its colonies amounted to 8% of its national income on the assumption that the revenues received were used productively. The profits from colonial trade did not contribute more than 18% of the total capital formation of Spain during 1784-96. Graf and Irigoin argue that although the share of revenues extracted from the Americas rose to 13% by the late 18th century the actual share collected fell from 11% (1729-33) to 4.8% (1785-9), rising slightly to 5.2 % (1796-1800) owing to intra-colonial transfers.

13.5 THE GREAT DIVERGENCE

The debate on divergence involves three issues. First, the reasons for the rise of industrial capitalism in Europe and why Britain became the First Industrial nation. The second issue is to determine when the ascendancy of the west emerged and the third one is why China and India lagged behind Western Europe. Kenneth Pomeranz has argued that the standard of living in the Yangtze delta of China and southern England was similar and that per capita income, levels of urbanization and labour productivity in agriculture were comparable. It was access to the land and labour of the New World which made the crucial difference in the later economic trajectories of the two regions. The Americas were important not because of the flow of capital to finance growth but because they released Britain from an ecological constraint and a foreseeable Malthusian problem. It could urbanize and industrialize based on the imports of food and raw materials. This development was as important as the change in energy use from wood to coal highlighted by E. A. Wrigley. Recent work has confirmed Pomeranz's claims that levels of agricultural productivity in the Yangtze delta and in England were similar. He therefore questions the dominant "agrarian fundamentalism" which had asserted that levels of industrialization in Europe were related to differences in levels of agricultural productivity. At the same time Pomeranz has acknowledged that he had not considered the importance of war and the rise of the military fiscal state in the rise of industrialization but most notably the role of science and technology. He acknowledges that the divergence may have begun by 1750 or even 1700, instead of 1800.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Discuss the role of colonial trade in industrialization of Western Europe.

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2) How the slave trade was important in development of economies of Western Europe?

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13.6 AGRICULTURE AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The observation that, in the century before the industrial revolution, consumption was rising even while real wages were not led Jan de Vries to propound the argument about an industrious revolution. A change in the economic behaviour of the household created a greater output of marketable goods and increase in the hours of work. The wage rates did not rise but the increased output and labour of the households – including women and children – added to the income of such households. Increased income of such households created the demand for new commodities like sugar, tea and tobacco. This constituted a demand side explanation of the industrial revolution instead of the supply side one which focused on the expansion of production driven by technological advancement. The productive resources of the household were reallocated because of changes in relative prices and tastes as well as decline in transaction costs. This change, from the mid seventeenth century onwards, was not based on discipline, coercion or upper class attempts at educating the common people but on aspirations of peasant and cottar households who raised their output of food and proto-industrial products.

The Marxist argument was that the enclosure movement in Britain led to the consolidation of large farms, the emergence of landlessness and the development of capitalism in agriculture based on capital investment and wage labour. Brenner has emphasized the importance of class conflicts and changes in the class structure which created the conditions for capitalism in agriculture and the preconditions for the industrial revolution. Zmolek has argued that the growth of agrarian capitalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries gradually exerted economic pressures upon manufacturing to constantly improve productivity as in agriculture. While acknowledging other factors like international trade and the development of technology he emphasizes "the transformation of class relations and the

corresponding growth of an unprecedented, integrated and specialized domestic market that preceded the Industrial Revolution in England and Britain." [Zmolek, p. 288]

Allen has argued that the growth of cities and high wages in countries like England and the Netherlands led to greater demand for food and labour from the agricultural sector. This led to the agricultural revolution and output per farm worker increased by fifty percent in both countries. The introduction of new cropping patterns like increasing cultivation of clover, and fertilization techniques like marling, contributed to higher productivity growth. Agricultural productivity in England was higher than in France because in 1800 it had two-thirds more animal power than the latter. The availability of horsepower in the Mediterranean region was even lower. Allen argues that although agricultural revolutions in the Netherlands and England were integral to the economic expansion, the role of the cities was more pronounced that of the countryside. There was not only a landlord but a yeoman agricultural revolution. Yeomen too wanted to buy tea, sugar, tobacco, clocks and other items of consumption available to urban labourers. London and the proto-industrial centres were the "engines of growth." [Allen, 2009]

13.7 WAR AND MILITARY FISCAL FACTORS

Several scholars have pointed out that the Europeans had developed war capitalism and military technology that enabled them to conquer and dominate large parts of the world. Using gunpowder technology they were able to conquer thirty-five percent of the world and to dominate trade routes in Asia by 1800. Military rivalry and incessant warfare in Europe compelled states to improve technology. Competitive markets created the conditions for military innovation. Hoffman has argued that while the small states of Europe were spending huge sums of money to win wars with other powers using gunpowder technologies other powers in the world were not. The Chinese did not try and improve gunpowder technology they had developed because they had to fight nomads against whom archers and cavalry were more effective. The Ottoman Empire and armies in India too had limited incentive to develop gunpowder technologies because they had to rely on cavalry against the nomads. Although the Ottomans were also fighting the major gunpowder states in Europe their tax revenues were less than those of eighteenth century European states. Therefore, they were unable to innovate or import weapons on a scale sufficient to achieve victory.

In Britain the government could levy more taxes than other European states. Indirect taxation became important in the seventeenth century notably after the Civil War and the Interregnum. After 1713 nearly three-quarters of all tax revenues in Britain were collected in the form of indirect taxes on production of goods and services in the form of excise and stamp duties. The government could service debts based on the tax revenues expected in the future. Commercialization, colonization, urbanization and proto-industrialization created more opportunities for duties on imports as well as on production within Britain. Major European powers with powerful provincial estates, oversized bureaucracies and expensive franchised administrations could not increase tax collection as effectively as in Britain. The wealthy elites accepted higher levels of taxation since the state introduced measures that added to the value of their property rights. A favourable mercantilist strategy which created gains from servicing an expanding global economy increased the English wage levels conducive to technological growth.

While the larger agrarian states of Eastern Europe and of West, South and East Asia had a lower tax rate per capita and per square kilometer of territory the smaller states raised their resources by adopting mercantilist policies. The landed interest was coopted by not increasing taxes on land but on imports and domestic output. The state tried to strengthen the role of markets by various means. Alliances forged between landlord and merchant groups led to investments in mines, harbours and canals before the emergence of railways. These projects provided opportunities to develop new technologies that led to the industrial revolution. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 did not lead in a straightforward way to the creation of more efficient markets and fiscal policies. What changed was that localized rent-seeking was increasingly replaced by national level coalitions that became influential in Parliament.

13.8 SCIENCE AND THE INDUSTRIAL ENLIGHTENMENT

The great advances in science in the 17th century were once treated as crucial for the industrial revolution. But some historians have argued that science was not so directly useful for production processes in industry until 1900. The political fragmentation in Europe and the recurring conflicts between states created the demand for newer techniques by rulers and the wealthy elites. The existence of intellectual and cultural unity in Europe created the ability of dissenters and innovators to migrate to other territories or rival states. The Republic of Letters that emerged in Europe before the emergence of the Enlightenment created an integrated market for ideas from the sixteenth century onwards. The institutions supported markets while the Republic of Letters sustained the market for ideas. In other parts of the world scientific developments eventually petered out or became slowed down. Chinese science was not sufficiently interested in how and why things worked despite its practical achievements and there was a reluctance to accept ideas from outside.

By 1700 European knowledge in hydraulics, optics, astronomy, scientific instruments and crop rotations had grown substantially. The coevolution of propositional and prescriptive knowledge created a self-reinforcing virtuous cycle. Therefore the gap between West and East in technology grew rapidly in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. According to Mokyr more than ideas of scientists like Newton the culture of "careful measurement, precise formulation, well-designed experiments, empirical testing, (and) mathematization" created the climate for invention and adoption of new techniques in the early stages of the industrial revolution. The Industrial Enlightenment laid the foundations for the industrial revolution in Western Europe although it began first in Britain. He argues that earlier "technological efflorescences" in Song China and Renaissance Europe had fizzled out and asserts that the new culture of innovation to promote economic growth was sui generis-a new and unique phenomenon in the world.

13.9 WAGES AND FACTOR PRICES

The Newcomen engine, improvements in the steam engine, coke smelting, and the invention of the spinning jenny and water frame led to the industrial revolution in Britain. Yet Britain was not the only country which made advances in science-the French had developed the paper, textiles, clock-making and glass industries.

Britain had higher wages than other parts of the world while the prices of both capital and energy were low. Therefore, the businesses in Britain had a strong incentive to use more capital and energy instead of labour and to improve or invent technology. Product innovation was encouraged because the high level of wages created a mass market for consumer goods. High real wages enabled more people in Britain to pay for their education and training. The higher levels of literacy and numeracy increased the ability to invent and improve existing technology. The structure of wages and prices in Britain was itself the outcome of her success in commercial and imperial expansion. Even though scientific developments did contribute to the industrial revolution not much progress would have been made if there had been no demand for the inventions. The Jacquard loom in France, which reduced the cost of making lace and knitwear, could not expand output substantially because the demand for these products was limited unlike in the case of the cotton industry.

According to Allen, there were four ways in which wages were higher than that of other countries. Firstly, in terms of the exchange rate. Wages measured in terms of value in silver or the silver wage indicated higher living standard in Britain compared to other countries. They were also higher when compared with capital prices. Finally, compared to the price of coal-or energy price - wages in northern and western Britain were very high. Cheap energy encouraged the substitution of labour by capital. The city of London, which grew because of international trade, created the demand for coal. It was the rising demand for coal which led to the exploitation of coal resources.

13.10 THE GREAT AND LITTLE DIVERGENCE – WESTERN EUROPE AND THE REST

Several authors have highlighted that there was a growing gap between Europe and Asia and between West Europe and South, Central and East Europe by the seventeenth century in terms of wages. According to one estimate, the silver wage in India was about forty percent of the silver wage in Britain in the first half of the 18th century. The grain wage in India was closer to that of Britain until the close of the seventeenth century but declined substantially in the eighteenth century. India was comparable to the peripheral countries of Europe. The higher silver wages in Europe reflected higher command over traded goods and higher levels of urbanization and greater non-agricultural production. Similarly, the living standards were lower in Beijing, Canton or Suzhou compared to London and Amsterdam. Another finding was that for most of the eighteenth century unskilled workers in Chinese and Japanese cities had an approximately similar standard of living as unskilled workers in central and southern Europe. That only England and the Low countries forged ahead of the rest in the early modern period — and not all the European countries — is regarded as proof of both the Great and Little Divergence.

Tirthankar Roy has calculated that the average income in Bengal was one-fifteenth of the income in England and Wales in 1763 estimating it at rupees 12.5 or 1.25 pounds. The silver equivalent of these incomes also differed similarly but the grain equivalent income was one-fifth of that of England. Like Parthasarthy for South India he argues that the Bengal peasant was as well off — in terms of caloric sufficiency — as those in Europe and the Yangtze delta. However, like the peasants in China those in Bengal were vulnerable to higher subsistence

risks. In both India and China the concept of absolute private property rights did not exist but there were substantial informal or customary rights in both countries. In India customary laws of the merchants were good enough to secure a leading position in the international textile market. What was crucial was that tax revenues per capita in grams of silver declined in India and China from 20 to 15 and from 7 to 3-4 between 1670 and 1800. In China the per capita tax revenues in 1850 fell to less than a half of what they were in 1700. This was the exact opposite of what was happening in Europe. The states in West and South Asia shared sovereignty with chiefs and military elites and landlords or jagirdars. China and India, affected more by internal rebellion than external threats, adopted a policy of appeasement by keeping tax levels moderate.

Prasannan Parthasarthy has pointed out that although pessimistic assessments of developments in India and China are based on rigorous quantitative methods the range or quality of the data they rely on is often inadequate and insufficient. This applies to assessments of the flow of silver into India and the standard of living. In his view the inadequacy of Indian institutions is overstated. The grain markets in India were less unified than in Europe but the substantial market for cotton was more unified. The capital market functioned with rates of interest very similar to those in Europe. The states in India played an important role by investing in agriculture to expand cultivation and output in good times and to aid recovery after crises. Moreover, astronomy, metallurgy, mathematics and manufacturing flourished based on patronage of rulers in Jaipur, Tanjore and Lucknow.

According to Parthasarthy, the "coal, iron and steam complex" did not emerge in the more advanced regions of India and China because of differences in economic and ecological pressures and the responses of economic agents and the state to these challenges. The state in Britain was very supportive of the cotton industry, businessmen were acutely conscious of the competition from Indian textiles and breakthroughs in technology enabled Britain to forge ahead. Even Adam Smith had noted the competition from Indian textiles that British businessmen faced. As London was a major consumer of coal for domestic use it was politically important to ensure the supply of reasonably priced coal. The ability to tax coal also made the state keen to promote the coal industry. In China coal found primarily in the North was far from the major areas in the Yangtze region. The fiscal resources of the Chinese state were limited and it allocated huge sums in order to maintain granaries to cope with scarcity and famine. In India the pressures were different because even in densely populated regions like the Ganges-Yamuna Doab there was substantial forest cover in the 18th century. As the advanced regions of India did not face a shortage of wood — as in western and central Europe and parts of China — they had little incentive to use coal and lignite for domestic or industrial purposes.

Kaveh Yazdani has argued that eighteenth century Gujarat and Mysore were in "a transitory stage that left open the possibility of a successful industrialization process" before British conquest. He concludes that though Mysore witnessed great market orientation there was no agrarian consumer revolution as in the advanced parts of Europe. The state witnessed semi-modernization even though the "bourgeoisie" was weak and scientific and intellectual development was insufficient. He asserts that without colonial rule a state led process of forced industrialization would have been possible once indigenous circumstances had matured. In 18th century Gujarat although there was a large banking and small

scale sector, the GDP increased, and imports grew, there were no signs of a consumer or industrious revolution as in Britain or Holland. Abundant supply of wood, geo-climatic conditions and global leadership in textiles diminished the incentive to introduce technical innovations or explore coal mines. The greatest gap was in coal mining and mechanical engineering which were the driving force in British and European industrialization.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Briefly discuss the role of war and military fiscal policies in economic development of Western Europe.

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2) Was there any divergence in economic development of the Western Europe and the Rest of the world? When and how did it emerge?

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13.11 LET US SUM UP

The relative importance of factors like emergence of agrarian capitalism, development of science and technology, fiscal and state policies, the cost of labour relative to capital and the role of the colonies for the onset of the industrial revolution are still being debated. Many scholars assert that the industrial revolution and the divergence between Western Europe and the rest of the world was a product of long-term factors or endogenous developments; others focus on colonial exploitation. Lately, the persistent underestimation of the potentialities for development in the non-European world has been highlighted. Although the arguments are more nuanced today the debate is far from over.

13.12 KEY WORDS

Cottar : A farm labourer or tenant occupying a cottage in return for labour (in Scotland and Ireland) .

Divergence : The notion of economic and technological gap between the West Europe and the Rest of the world that emerged in early Modern Times.

Industrious Revolution : A change in the economic behaviour of the

household created a greater output of marketable goods and increase in the hours of work prior to Industrial revolution that increased their income and therefore consumption levels.

13.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) See Section 13.3

2) See Sections 13.2 and 13.4

Check Your Progress 2

1) See Section 13.7

2) See Section 13.10

SUGGESTED READINGS

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ISBN: 978-93-91229-93-1