

**TRENDS IN HISTORIOGRAPHY
MODULE II**

TOPIC: MARX AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR


DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

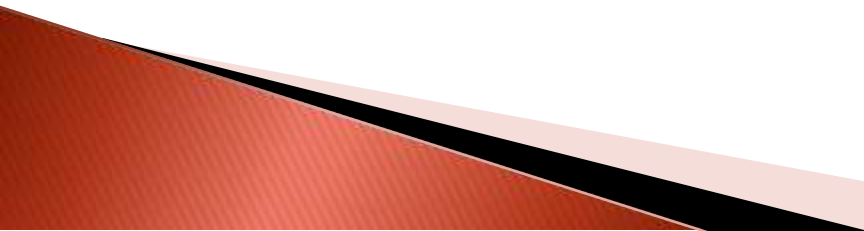
LITTLE FLOWER COLLEGE, GURUVAYOOR

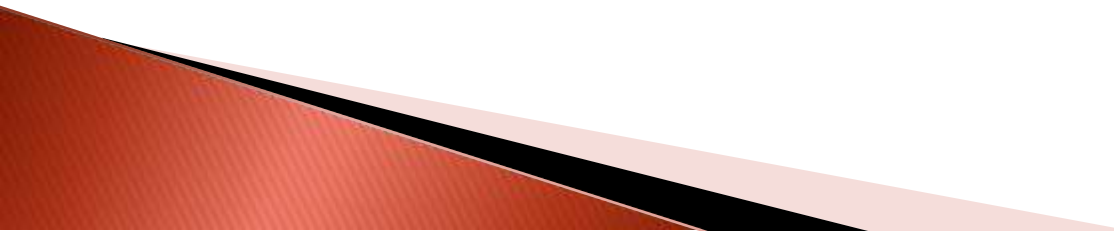
2020

KARL MARX(1818-1883)

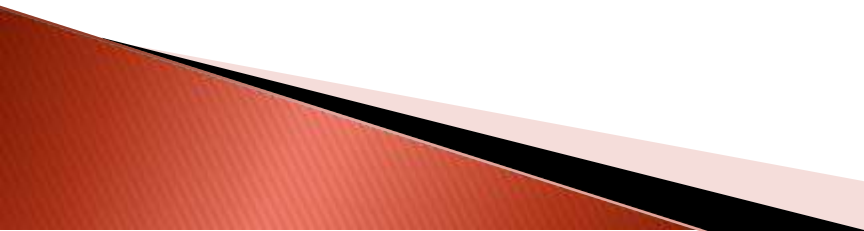
- ▶ Karl Marx, the thinker and Prophet, the scientist and moralist, German philosopher of History
- ▶ In 1847, Marx wrote his ‘Poverty of Philosophy’- He developed the fundamental proposition of his economic interpretation of history
- ▶ His ‘Communist Manifesto of 1848’ is the most celebrated work which contains a summary of his whole social philosophy
- ▶ His most famous book was ‘Das Capital’, in which he developed the theory of the capitalist system and its dynamism
- ▶ Marxism is a philosophy of history impregnated by an elaborate economic theory
- ▶ It implies that history is governed by laws which the human mind can recognize or determine
- ▶ First principle of Marxism is determinism, which is a solid and concrete

- ▶ -as the ‘Granite foundation’
 - ▶ Its nature is objective historical necessity which is at the root of every causation
 - ▶ With the historical necessity as the basis of determinism, Marx proceeded to his economic interpretation of history
 - ▶ History is governed by certain laws
 - ▶ The first of these laws is to determine the direction of the historical process
 - ▶ Marx emphasized that economic development are basic to social change. Ideas and institutions, Law and politics and even Religion and art are greatly affected by economic factors
 - ▶ Marxism does not deny the influence of ideas on History
 - ▶ It cannot be denied that technological progress is the cause of some very important aspects of cultural and institutional development
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- ▶ To a great extent the Renaissance was the product of improved shipping, increased trade, improved crafts, new discoveries, new trade routes and perfection of all sorts of tools
 - ▶ Marx believed that important historical progress is achieved through an all out conflict between an old and new principle of social organisation
 - ▶ This idea is related to the Hegelian concept of dialectics, where a discussion is involved between thesis and antithesis to produce synthesis
 - ▶ Progress is the result of tension between old and new principle of social organisation
 - ▶ Marx believed that there was always a clash of interest among social groups which he called class struggle
 - ▶ Marx has defined value in his own way and says that value is labour crystalised- Labour power is the only power that can produce a value greater than its own
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- ▶ Marx has contributed very radical ideas in several sectors of human life
 - ▶ His purpose was to achieve a better understanding of the conditions of the human development and his answer for such a development was a communist society based on rational planning, cooperative production and equality of distribution..
 - ▶ Marxism was a response to the economic and social hardships accompanying the growth of industrial capitalism
 - ▶ Marxism may be described as a synthesis of radicalism, optimism and commitment to science
 - ▶ Marxism regards history as the development of man's effort to master the forces of nature, and hence of production
 - ▶ According to Marx, mankind has gone through three or four major modes of production namely ancient slave society,feualism and capitalism
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MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

- ▶ Intended to be a naturalistic, empirical and scientific account of historical events, which takes industry and economics as basic factors
 - ▶ One of the important step in Marxian analysis is property and power
 - ▶ All important social changes must originate in productive activities and the organisation in which they take place
 - ▶ This is the central element of the theory of historical materialism
 - ▶ Marx employed three models-dialectical development, Organic unity, and base and superstructure
 - ▶ Among these models, the base and superstructure is the central one and the other two models are supportive
 - ▶ Marxi's model of base and superstructure marked a great change in historiography
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- ▶ He introduced into the social sciences of his day a new method of inquiry, new concepts and a number of bold hypotheses to explain the rise and fall of human society