

**SUBJECT: POLITICAL SCIENCE I**

**COURSE: BA LLB SEMESTER I**

**TEACHER: MS. DEEPIKA GAHATRAJ**

**MODULE: MODULE V, MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT**

## **SOCIALISM**

Socialism as a politico-economic doctrine is the product of western thought. Although socialist sentiments like the urge for social amelioration, concern for the downtrodden, the craving for social justice and cooperative living are expressed in the scriptures of the East as well as the west, the doctrine of socialism in the present form is not older than the 19th century.

In company with other ideological concepts, socialism has a double reference. On the one hand, it refers to ideals, values, properties of what is often called the socialist 'vision'. On the other hand, it refers to empirical features of social and political institutions, which are supposed to embody the vision. On the level of values socialism stands for the values of freedom, equality, community, brotherhood, social justice, the classless society, cooperation progress, peace, prosperity, abundance, and happiness - to mention just the most important ones. On the level of institutions socialism is opposed to capitalist private enterprise system which it seeks to replace by a system of control over wealth and property and the social supervision or organization of economic activity, this is often summarized in the formula, the 'common' or 'public' ownership of the means of production

A socialist is not satisfied with merely economic reforms, but advocates a comprehensive educational, ethical policy. Socialism is not only a vision of life in a rational society in which there will be no exploitation. One cannot deny that the compassion for the downtrodden and the concern for social injustice have inspired social reformers and socialists, but it is equally true that these alone do not constitute socialism. Socialism in its wide meaning attaches importance to the economic aspect of human well being.

The definition of socialism in terms of production, rather than distribution is consonant with Marx. For socialists economic equality is regarded as the central tenet of socialism. Socialists insist that "planned social purpose" should guide, control and mitigate evils of the system of production and consumption. Socialists consider that it is essential that profit based competitive economy should be replaced by a cooperative management for the welfare of all. Socialism believes in the removal of disparities and aims at providing equal opportunities to all. Socialism is opposed to religious creed dogmatism and believes in secularism.

Socialism in developing countries aims at total welfare for all citizens. It stands for social justice, rapid economic growth and planning. It aims at the ending of monopolies and social injustices in society. In essence socialism implies a fellowship, which denies distinctions of

class, believes in equality, common ownership, socialization of the means of production and equal opportunities for the development of personality to all.

Socialism “undoubtedly presents a bewildering variety of forms and doctrines”. It is also very difficult to give a precise and neat definition of socialism “which will embrace all socialists and exclude all non-socialists”. No doubt the several schools of socialists differ considerably in their programme of actions. But as **Coker** remarks, “they agree in certain of their general aims; all seek to secure, through some substantial limitations on the private ownership of property, a fairer and practically more satisfactory apportionment of wealth and economic opportunity.”

The **Encyclopaedia of the Labour Movement** defines socialism as “a working class doctrine and movement aiming, through class struggle, at the collective control of society by the workers and the establishment of self-government in industry.” **Proudhon** is quoted as having defined socialism as consisting of “every aspiration towards the amelioration of society.” **Lenin** has defined socialism as “proletariat plus philosophy.” According to **Bertrand Russell**, “Socialism, like everything else that is vital, is rather a tendency than a strictly definable body of doctrines”. He adds: “But I think we shall come nearest to the essence of socialism by defining it as the advocacy of communal ownership of land and capital. Communal ownership may mean ownership by a democratic state, but cannot be held to include ownership by any state, which is not democratic. **Ludwig Moses** has defined Socialism from an economic angle in his book ‘Socialism, “Socialism is a programme for transforming the economy and constitution of society according to a defined ideal. Socialism is essentially concerned with the idea of equality. It aims at the highest rationalization of material life, a rationalization which capitalism could never attain. The essence of socialism is that all the means of production are in the exclusive control of the organized community.

## 2.1 PRINCIPLES OF SOCIALISM

Some of the principles of socialism include:

**-Public Ownership:** This is the core tenet of socialism. In a socialist economy, the means of production and distribution are owned, controlled and regulated by the public, either through the state or through cooperatives.

The basic motive is not to use the means of production for profit, but rather for the interest of social welfare.

**-Economic Planning:** Unlike in a capitalist economy, a socialist economy is not driven by the laws of supply and demand. Instead, all economic activities- production, distribution, exchange and consumption are planned and coordinated by a central planning authority, which is usually the government.

A socialist economy relies on the central planning authority for distribution of wealth, instead of relying on market forces.

**-Egalitarian Society:** Socialism rose as an opposition to the economic inequality brought about by early capitalism. As such, it aims for an egalitarian society where there are no classes. Ideally, all the people within a socialist economy should have economic equality.

**-Provision of Basic Needs:** In a socialist economy, the basic needs – food, shelter, clothing, education, health and employment are provided by the government without any discrimination. This is one of the greatest advantages of socialism.

Provision of basic needs by the government can, however, result in the masses thinking that they cannot survive without the government, creating a perfect environment for the rise of authoritarian governments.

**-No Competition:** Typically, when you want to buy a car, you are spoilt for choice. There are different brands and different models with varying features and prices.

It's up to you to choose one the best one for you. The same applies for many other products. In a socialist economy, there is no competition in the market since the state is the sole entrepreneur. The state only focuses on provision of necessities, which results in limited consumer choice.

**-Social Welfare:** Another major reason behind the rise of socialism was to protect the working class from exploitation. Under socialist systems, there is no exploitation.

The state takes care of the working class through employment protection, minimum wages and trade union recognition rights.

## REFERENCES:

- <http://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/23733/1/Unit-15.pdf>
- <http://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/21029/1/Unit-26.pdf>
- <https://www.politicalsciencenotes.com/liberalism/classical-liberalism-elements-theories-and-revival/807>
- [https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/51983/7/07\\_chapter%201.pdf](https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/51983/7/07_chapter%201.pdf)
- [https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/115769/9/09\\_chapter%203.pdf](https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/115769/9/09_chapter%203.pdf)
- [https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/11137/12/12\\_chapter%206.pdf](https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/11137/12/12_chapter%206.pdf)
- Myneni. S.R. (2018), *Political Science for Law Students*, Allahabad Law Agency, Faridabad