**MARXIAN CLASS APPROACH TO POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY**

The Marxian approach is based largely on the writing of Karl Marx and Engels. It is also called Marxian-Leninist Approach because it was explained, developed and productively used for the first time by Lenin, who was followed by Stalin and Mao Tse Tung.

Marxian approach is also known as Class approach because it seeks to study politics and society in terms of relations between two economic classes – the haves and the have-nots or the owners and the workers. It is based on the view that political relations are determined by economic relations between the two economic classes which have always been present in every society. Almond and Powell have summarised that “Marxist theory presents the argument that the class structure of a society determines the structure and process of the political system and its performance in society”.

**Key Features of Marxian Approach**

1. **Values and Actions as the two main pillars –** The Marxian approach is a Value laden approach. It stands based upon several values- what is real is matter in the form of material conditions. It rejects the concept of value0free political science. It stands for the end of capitalism and the securing of socialism. In fact, it regards the coming of socialism as inevitable and therefore wants the workers to work for securing it. It stands for workers revolution against capitalism. It advocates action towards the attainment of Socialism and describes the exercise as Scientific Socialism or Communism.
2. **More emphasis upon practise than theory –** The Marxist approach seeks to discover the objective laws of historical evolution and social change. It also postulates action to bring about all changes aimed at securing the end of class exploitation and for pushing forward the march towards the attainment of communist society- the classless and stateless society.
3. **Close relation between theory and practise –** Marxist approach advocates the theory and practice are intimately related. Theory must lead to practise, otherwise it is useless. The aim of revolutionary theory is to guide and lead revolutionary movement. Theory has value only in so far as it can lead to action.
4. **Political Relations are the product of economic relations -** Marxist thinkers regards politics as a product of the economic relations between the two economic classes – the haves and the haves not. The haves in order to maintain their system of control and exploitation of the have-nots use state power in the form of laws, rules and policies. The whole exercise is controlled, regulated and run by the haves for exploiting and keeping the have-nots under their superior control. Politics has its roots in economics.
5. **State as a Class Institution –** Marxian approach views state as a class mechanism, tool of the rich for exploiting the poor. State is a class instrument or machine, created at particular stage of social evolution by the rich for exploiting the poor. Marxist approach assigns no place to state in the communist society which is essentially to be a classless and stateless society.

**Critical evaluation**

1. Politics is not a dependent process – Marxian approach wrongly assumes that politics is a dependent process- dependent upon economic relations.
2. Over simplified view of society – Its view of society as a society divided between two opposed economic classes is unacceptable.
3. Class struggle is not the law of evolution – It wrongly suggests that class struggle has been and still continues to be the eternal code of social evolution. It also wrongly projects that revolution is always a natural and final culmination of class struggle.
4. State is not a class institution of the rich – Marxian view of the state as a machine of the rich and as an instrument created at a particular time still used by them as a means of exploiting the poor, is not acceptable.
5. Duverger point out that it overestimates the part played by class conflict in the formation of political differences and it gives too narrow a definition of class.