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**RESEARCH PAPER**

## Karl Marx's Theory of Communism: An Analytical Study of its Principles, Application, and Critiques

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**ABSTRACT**

This study critically examines Karl Marx's theory of communism, focusing on its ideological foundations, historical implementation, and political legacy. The primary objectives are to analyze Marx's vision of a classless and stateless society, evaluate the impact of communist ideology on different states, and assess the major criticisms of Marx's conception of communism. Karl Marx (1818-1883), together with Friedrich Engels, developed a revolutionary framework that sought to eliminate class exploitation through collective ownership of the means of production and the equitable distribution of resources. Employing a qualitative research methodology, this study utilizes analytical, historical, and descriptive approaches, drawing upon secondary sources and relevant literature. The findings reveal that Marxist communism significantly influenced political developments and revolutionary movements in countries such as Russia, China, and Cuba, where communist governments attempted to establish social and economic equality through state control of resources, universal access to education, and healthcare services. However, the practical implementation of communism often resulted in economic inefficiencies, restrictions on individual freedoms, political authoritarianism, and challenges to productivity and innovation. The study concludes that while Marx's vision addressed important concerns regarding inequality, exploitation, and social justice, its application in various contexts produced outcomes that diverged considerably from its original theoretical objectives.

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**KEYWORDS** Communism, Marxism, Class Struggle, Historical Materialism, Proletariat, Bourgeoisie, Capitalism, Revolution, Social Justice, Political Ideology

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**Introduction**

Karl Marx was a German philosopher mainly known for his work in communism. He substantially influenced the development and popularization of that ideology. In short, communism describes a mode of society with no use of money, no state or national borders, and no division by social classes. Wealth and resources are shared in such a society, with no distinction between rich and poor. Communism seems to have an ancient historical background. For example, human beings lived in small tribal communities as hunter-gatherers around 10,000 years ago. Tribes had no concept of money, of private ownership, or of national boundaries. They lived in a collectivist manner, sharing resources among all members of the group.

Karl Marx is generally known as the father of communism. Together with Friedrich Engels, he published *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848. Marx lived during the period of the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of large factories and machinery.

This period modified society in important respects regarding labor and conditions of economy. During the time of the Industrial Revolution, factory workers frequently had to endure terrible and inhuman conditions. Factory owners were usually wealthy who subjected laborers to work long hours for little wages. Whatever profit was accrued through the labor looked largely to have benefitted the owner while leaving behind the worker to languish in wretchedness. Marx noted this inequality in economic conditions and saw the emergence of two classes; the bourgeoisie, or the rich factory owners, and the proletariat, or the working class. For him, this was an unjust and exploitative system (Marx, 1848).

His answer was to propose a classless and stateless society, in which the means of production, like factories and farms, would be owned collectively by the people instead of individual capitalists. He termed this kind of society as a utopia, as a perfect state of existence where all individuals are treated equally. In Marx's view, the workers would unite and drive out the government or ruling authority of the day so as to usher in a communist society. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx lays out the methods by which that transformation can occur, with particular emphasis on the revolution and collective ownership required to create a fair and equal society (Mason, 2015).

### **Literature Review**

According to the *Communist Manifesto*, every feature of class distinction and inequality created out of wealth, race, or religion would be abolished in a communist society. Education and healthcare would be free for everyone. The concept of inherited wealth would be abolished so that a person's wealth would not automatically be inherited by his descendants. There would be no private ownership-no one could claim exclusive rights to land or factories. Everything would belong to the people, or, more to the point, have all property and means of production owned in common. Wealth would, therefore, be available in equal measure, and the gap between rich and poor would be closed. All the resources and assets would come to be owned by everyone in common. While these ideas create the world of absolute equality, justice, and fairness, they are, however, theoretical statements. In practice, Karl Marx did not see true implementation of communism during the years he lived. This is the *Communist manifesto*: a communistic society would abolish all class distinctions and the whole of the inequalities connected with wealth, race, or even religion. Education and health would be made available to all and sundry. The concept of inherited wealth would cease, whereby an individual's wealth would not automatically be transferred to future generations. Then, there would exist no private ownership - no one could claim exclusive rights to land or factories. Hence all property and means of production would belong to people in common. Wealth would therefore be made equal and remove the distinction between the rich and the poor. In this system, all would own resources and assets in common. Thus exciting, these ideas have become conjectural rather than real. True communism did not, however, exist in the life of Karl Marx. (Beer, 2020).

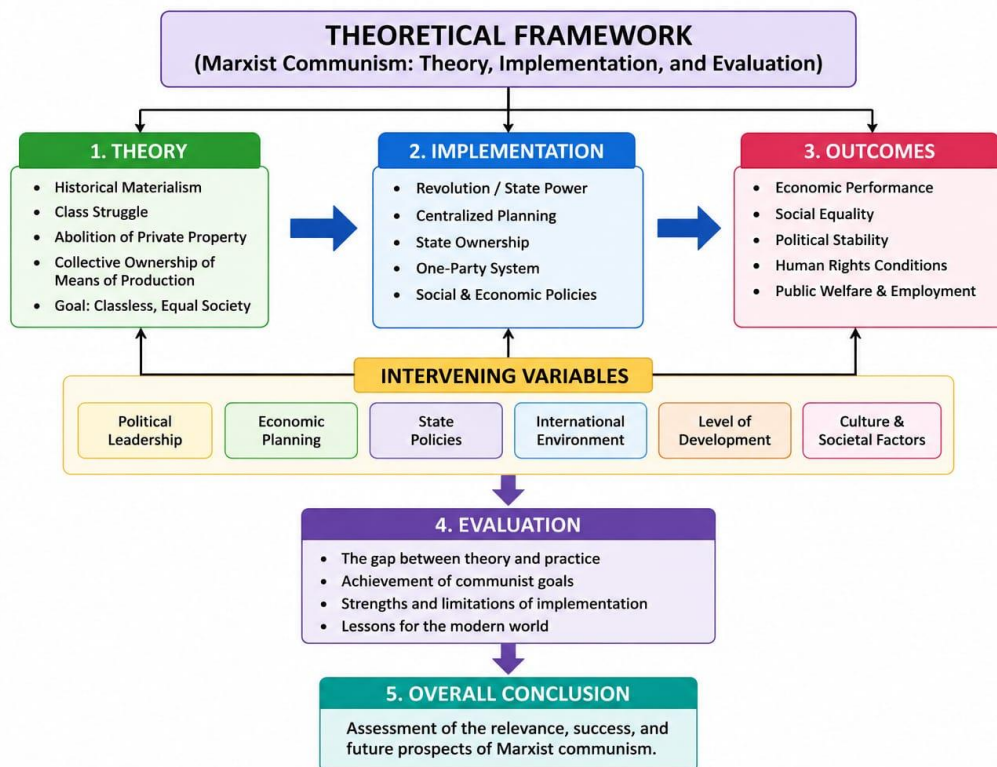


Figure: 1 Theoretical frame work

Real practical application was mostly of the true sense after the Russian revolution of 1917. In Russia, Communist workers together overthrew the Russian monarch who used to be called the Czar at the time and their leader Lenin for the First time implemented huge scale idea of communism. Lenin took some revolutionary measures to him time. The human rights of the labors were recognized. The hours of labour for a week were confined to 8 hours per day and 5 days a week. Before this, workers used to work for more than 12, 13 in factories. But Lenin was the first to introduce it towards education. His actions for farming included seizing lands from the wealthy landowners, and redistribute them to the farmers. The factories got nationalized control. They fell under state possession. Lenin was convinced what he was doing was an absolute right. He did not have the stomach to suffer the harmful criticism. Therefore, he forbade remaining all political parties to create a one-party system. Any individual who spoke out against communism was accused to have anti-communist sentiments, even imprisoned, exiled, or executed (Holzer, 2017).

The Soviet Union maintained harsh conditions for its workers, and the economic situation was so dire that millions perished due to famine and hunger. Because of these circumstances, many critics refer to Stalin's system as state capitalism a model that had little to do with the true ideals of communism and more closely resembled a capitalist structure under strict government control. After Stalin, Mao Zedong emerged in China with an even more radical and violent interpretation of communism, known as Maoism. The term "Maoist" is derived from his name. Inspired by the Soviet Union, many countries around the world attempted to adopt communism. However, the ideology was implemented differently in each nation. Despite their differences, one common feature among these communist states was the emergence of dictatorial regimes. In most cases, communism evolved into dictatorship (Lamichhane, 2024)

## Material and Methods.

In order to guide the study and draw conclusions, analytical, historical, and descriptive methods have been used. The use of a qualitative methodology makes it possible to conduct a comprehensive historical and theoretical analysis of the subject. The study of Karl Marx's theory of communism has been approached systematically to gain a comprehensive understanding of his ideas and their implications for society, economics, and politics. Various sources, particularly a review of relevant literature, have been utilized. Secondary sources were primarily consulted to

Develop a broader perspective on Marx's theory of communism and its influence on different states.

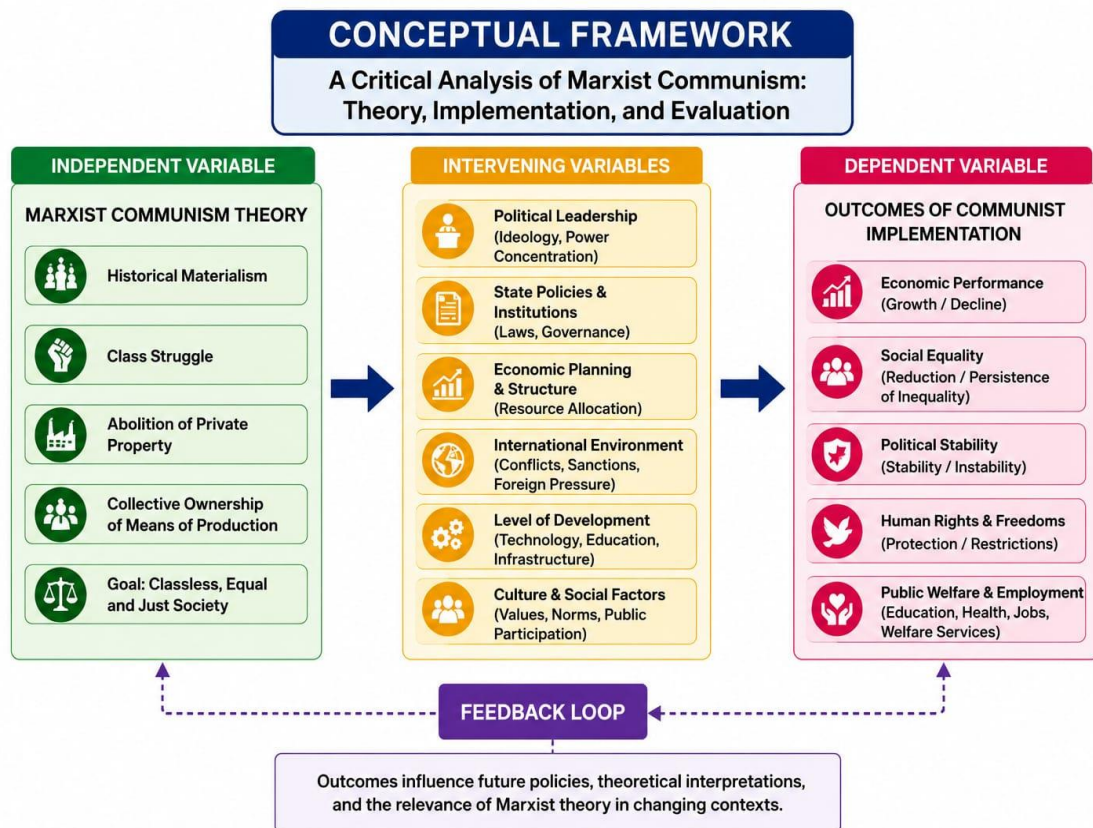


Figure: 2 Conceptual Frame Work

## Result and Discussion

Marxism is a political, economic, and social theory that examines how workers are impacted by the ruling class, leading to unequal privileges and wealth distributions in society. Marxism is important in today's society. Marxist philosophy pushes individuals to understand the relationship between what we keep and what we get in return for our work, as well as to challenge the ideology of a capitalist society. Class differences and the capitalist system are the main targets of his rage. When the capitalist class bourgeoisie takes advantage of the working class proletariat. Marxism believed that class struggle could lead to social change in a communist society. Where the people jointly own the means of production and resources, and there is neither a class system nor a state (Marx & Engles, 1848).

## **Communism**

- An ideology that supports total government control over production and resource Allocation.
- It creates a communist society with common people and distribution.

### **Impact of Communism**

Marxism's ultimate objective was communism, which emphasized equitable resource distribution and the elimination of class distinctions. Marx defined communism as a system where the state would control wealth and resources and everyone would be treated equally. A society in which everyone would benefit equally and would not be exploited by capitalism was communism's objective

### **Impact of Communism on Society**

After the 1917 Russian Revolution, when Vladimir Lenin established a communist government based on Marxism, communism was implemented in Russia and the Soviet Union. All resources, land, and industries were government in the Russia. The public received access to employment, education, and health care, but individual freedom was severely restricted at the same time. With communism's success came a slew of issues, including the oppression of workers, restrictions on religious freedom, and violations of individual rights

### **Example**

In the Soviet Union, where the state had complete control over resources, the government tried to increase economic equality and resource distribution, but communism also led to poverty and economic crises. The communist government of China also adopted Marxism in an effort to lessen class disparities and economic development. However, this came with the drawbacks of economic freedom and political oppression

### **Communism: The Ultimate Goal**

The ultimate goal of communism described an egalitarian society. Different ideologies underpin communism. The ultimate objective of communism is to establish a society without distinctions between people.

### **Class purpose**

Communism's primary objective was to end division in order to grant each person equal rights. The rich and the poor shouldn't be distinguished from one another.

### **Abolition of State**

According to Marx's theories, the state exists as long as class struggle continues. The ultimate goal of communism is to establish a stateless and stateless society where there is no need for the state because exploitation has ended.

**Fair distribution of resources:**

Resources in communism are the equitable distribution of wealth and services. Marx believed that people should be given resources based on what they need, not how hard they work. He wanted to achieve economic equality and give everyone the best possible way to live so they

Could live a better life. They have no interests that are distinct from those of the proletariat as a whole.

**A stateless, Classless Society**

In his communist theory, Karl Marx emphasized the idea of a society without states and classes. Marx predicted that this would be a society in which there would be no need for class distinctions or government coercion. Marx had this idea of a social system where everyone would have the same rights, freedom, and wealth.

**Classless Society (Abolition of Class Difference)**

Marx argues that capitalism is primarily to blame for the existing social divisions between classes. In capitalism, there are two major classes:

The **Bourgeoisie** is the class that owns the resources and methods of production (like factories, land, and mills) and makes money off of the workers.

The **proletariat** is the class of people who work for capitalists and receive wages in return for their labor. Proletariat members do not own the means of production.

Marx said that the elimination of class distinctions and exploitation is necessary in order to establish social justice. In a classless society, all people would be equal and resources and wealth would be distributed according to need, not according to capital or ability to work. This means that there would be no capitalists and no workers, but everyone would benefit equally from resources and welfare facilities (Ejeh, 2020).

**Stateless Society (Abolition of the State)**

Marx maintained that the state's primary objective is always to maintain power exploitation. In capitalism, the state enforces class distinctions while simultaneously safeguarding the bourgeoisie's interests. Marx asserted that the state's existence is necessary to sustain exploitation through government power as long as class distinctions persist. A society without a state is communism's ultimate objective. According to Marx, the state will cease to be necessary once class distinctions are eliminated and resources are distributed fairly. A stateless society means that there will be no need for oppressive institutions of government, and people will solve their economic and social issues directly democratically. The state is necessary as long as the class struggle continues, but the state will no longer play a role when class differences disappear. Decisions in this society will be based on equality and freedom for all people (McManus, 2023).

**The evolution of the state in Marx's theory**

Marx divided the state's development into three phases:

**The first stage:** In capitalism, the bourgeoisie capitalists are protected by the state. The second stage: Following the workers' revolution, the proletariat takes control of the state

**The Second Stage:** In this case, the state's goal is to fight against class disparities and safeguard the working class' interests.

**The third stage:** The state will cease to exist automatically when class differences are eliminated completely and resources are distributed fairly. People will live directly autonomously and equally in a stateless society.

### **Marx's vision of human Liberation**

According to Marx's Liberation has different ways in Pakistan.

### **Human Liberation in Capitalism**

According to Marx, human freedom under capitalism is actually an illusion. He believed that capitalism leads to social inequality, exploitation, and an imbalance of power. Under capitalism, the working class (proletariat) receives the value of their labor only as wages, but the real benefit of their labor is still reaped by the bourgeoisie (capitalist class).

According to Marx, under capitalism, man is deprived of his true freedom because he has to work for his daily needs, and all his time and energy are spent in the interests of his owner (the capitalist). In this case, individuals become "slaves", because they are not able to make their own decisions in life, but act in accordance with the interests of the capitalist (Heller,1982).

### **Human Liberation and Class Struggle**

According to Marx's theories, human liberation begins with class struggle. Marx said that until the proletariat (the working class) fights for its rights, it will not be able to achieve true freedom. During the class struggle, they against the capitalist system, and this workers' revolution will one day abolish capitalism and lay the foundation for a communist society

The goal of this struggle is to eliminate class divisions, where one class exploits another. According to Marx, when this class difference is eliminated, true freedom of humans will begin. In a communist society, everyone will have equal rights and freedom, and each individual will be able to benefit fully from their work (Fatima, Arif, & Arif, 2026).

### **Control over the means of production**

Marx linked the need for worker or community control over factories, resources, and the means of production to human liberation. As long as capitalists possess these resources, human freedom will be restricted since they will exploit them for their personal gain rather than the sake of society. Human freedom, according to Marx, is when the working class sizes and manages them to meet the requirements of every individual. People will be allowed to make their own choices and get fair compensation for their work, which will include their social, economic, and political freedom. Liberty in politics (Mumtaz, Fatima, & Manzoor, 2025).

## **Political Freedom**

Marx thought that the goal of political freedom was to eliminate the state's oppressive function. Under capitalism, the state is always in charge of the bourgeoisie's interests. Marx claimed that as long as there are class differences, the state will continue to have an oppressive role. Marx discussed the abolition of the state in Human Liberation. He claims that under communism, society will eventually become independent and peaceful, negating the need for the government. The person will get political independence and autonomy since he won't be impacted by any repressive state or government (Arif, Arif, & Fatima, 2026).

## **Freedom of Human Reality**

Marx claimed that the aim of human liberty, not merely economic freedom, was to comprehend human actuality and achieve its full liberation. Marx placed a strong emphasis on people reaching their greatest potential and leading distinctive lives. Marx argued that capitalism and class exploitation stifled and limited human potential and actuality. Every individual will have the opportunity to realize their full potential and man will be free in every way when communism eradicates exploitation and class differences (Arif, Arif, & Fatima, 2026).

## **The end of slavery and freedom in reality**

In the opinion of Marx, the first step toward human liberation was the abolition of economic slavery. As long as a person is being exploited economically by capitalism, he will not truly be free. Every individual will have the opportunity to be truly free and prosperous after capitalism is banned under communism, allowing them to live free from slavery for the remainder of their lives. Fundamental structural changes to society, especially with regard to private property, the economic system, and resource redistribution, are at the heart of Karl Marx's conception of communism. These ideas center on the disparities, exploitation, and concentration of power and money that Marx believed were fundamental to capitalism systems. A thorough and intelligible explanation of these concepts is provided bellows (Bhuiyan, 2019).

## **The Abolition of Private Property**

When Marx says that private property should be abolished, he is not referring to personal possessions like clothes, books, or your home. Instead, he is referring to private property in the resources used to produce goods and services, such as, machinery, these resources owned the bourgeoisie, a small group of people who benefit from the labor of the working class (proletariat) under capitalism

## **Excess Value**

However, workers receive significantly less than his output. The capitalist appropriates a lot of it. The term "surplus value" refers to the difference between the price a worker receives for his labor and the manufactured product's exchange value. Under the socialist system, the worker would receive the value of his labor. Furthermore, Marx insists, "He who does not work, neither shall eat".

### **Surplus Products**

It simply refers to the portion of the output that workers were required to pay to tribute, or tax

### **Redistribution of Resources According to Marx's Vision of Communism**

In redistribution of resources is one of the central ideas, meant to address the vast inequalities created by capitalism. Let's break down this concept in a human and relatable way to understand how it would work in a communist society

### **The Challenges of Capitalism**

Under capitalism, wealth, land, factories, and services are unevenly distributed. Only a few hold the power—a small group, mainly those who own factories, land, and the majority of resources. Workers, who typically receive a token of the value created by their labor, can help the people. According to Marx, the capitalist system will not stay around for long, as it is destined to be replaced by communism, a classless and stateless society in this criticism, Marx places special emphasis on the following problems with capitalism: exploitation of the working class, alienation, class struggle, economic crises, and concentration of wealth and power

### **Exploitation of the working class**

Marx argued that it is the case whereby, in capitalist systems, workers (proletarians) are by definition exploited by capitalists (bourgeois) land, and machinery. The labor of the worker creates value, but he receives an amount less than the value of his production. This difference between what is produced by labor is called surplus value.

### **Alienation of the Worker**

According to Marx, alienation happens to be another fundamental problem with capitalism.

Marx argued that capitalist labor is alienating in that a worker has no control at all over the products of his/her work and is not in any way able to express any say in how work needs to be organized

### **Economic Crises and Instability**

Marx also argued that the overproduction theory in economics makes capitalism inherently unstable and prone to a cycle of capitalist economic crises. Capital's propensity to increase value causes overproduction, which results in the production of goods that people are unable to afford. Hence the inevitable recession or depression that comes along: firms go bankrupt, workers end up losing their jobs and an economy burgesons into instability and chaos (Fatima, Javed, & Javed, 2026).



Figure: 3 challenges of Marxism capitalism

### Concentration of Wealth and Power

Wealth tends to be concentrated in the hands of a small number of individuals or businesses under capitalism, resulting in massive power and wealth disparities. Marx asserts that the bourgeoisie's accumulation of capital and control over the means of production is a natural consequence of capitalism. These capitalists reinvest their profits in further power and wealth concentration, which only serves to widen social gaps in society. This is the very nature of their business.

### The Inevitable Fall of Capitalism

Marx believed that capitalism was already effectively inherently exploitative, unstable, and unsustainable. Ultimately, exploitation, alienation, class struggle, economic crises, would result in dictatorship in Marxist theory. According to Marx, the contradictions within capitalism would become so insupportable that the proletariat would use force to overthrow the bourgeoisie and arrange a new society based on collective. That, according to Marx, would be communism: a classless, stateless society in which wealth and power are shared much more equally. John Stuart Mill is the trailblazer of utilitarianism and liberalism. Other philosophical schools have developed ideas in opposition or in contrast to utilitarianism. Some argue for the existence of absolute liberties of every single individual that cannot be violated by society and do not lend themselves to compromise by the general welfare of many people in society (Mason, 2015).

### Impact of Karl Marx's Theory of Communism

Karl theory of communism gave rise to revolutionary movements around the world. Its basic ideas, such as class struggle, the end of capitalism, and workers' rule,

promoted communist movements in various countries. Its impact was significant in the following countries.

### **Russia (Soviet Union)**

A communist government based on Marxism-Leninism was established in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The economy and politics came under complete state control. The Soviet Union led communism in the world for several decades

### **China**

In 1949, Mao Zedong launched a communist revolution. Agricultural and industrial reforms were implemented in China. Even today, China is officially a communist country, although it has also adopted the principles of a market economy.

### **Cuba**

The US-backed government was overthrown by Fidel Castro in 1959, and a communist regime was installed. Communist ideals are still upheld in Cuba today.

### **Vietnam, North Korea, and Eastern Europe**

These nations have experienced communism at different points in time, particularly during the Cold War. Vietnam became a communist state after defeating South Vietnam, which the US supported. The 1990s saw a decrease in communist regimes in Eastern Europe.

### **Impact of Communism in Pakistan**

Although communism had little direct effect in Pakistan, its theory had an impact on a number of political movements.

#### **Left-wing parties and labor movements**

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, left-wing organizations in Pakistan, such as the National Awami Party (NAP), persisted in their efforts to promote workers' rights. Peasant groups and labor unions in Pakistan spoke out against the capitalist and feudal systems after being impacted by Communism.

#### **Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Socialist Policy**

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto implemented a nationalization program in the 1970s that was somewhat inspired by communist principles. The working and peasant classes began to embrace Bhutto's socialist slogans Socialist Policy, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and the Impact of Karl Marx's Theory. In the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his power to (PPP) embraced a socialist philosophy that was partially inspired by Karl Marx's communist theory. Bhutto's system contained some aspects of Marxism, like as nationalization, workers' rights, and attempts to end feudalism, even if it was not entirely communist (Zahoor, 2017).

### **George Orwell and Karl Marx's Criticism of Communism**

From 1903 until 1950, British author, journalist, and social critic George Orwell was active. "Animal Farm," his best-known book, was published in 1945. Orwell was a fervent opponent of Marxist communism, which he felt actually encouraged oppression, corruption, and dictatorship, despite his opposition to capitalism and exploitative regimes. The communist ideology, put out by Karl Marx (1818-1883), promoted class conflict, the end of capitalism, and an egalitarian society. Whoever starts a revolution eventually turns into a dictator, according to Orwell. The rulers who took power in the name of the people themselves ended up becoming the new dictators, as was the case in China, the Soviet Union, and other communist nations. There is little evidence to support Marx's claim that "the working class (proletariat) will seize power from the capitalists through revolution. Following the Soviet Union's revolution, Lenin and Stalin imposed a harsh government that put dissenters to death. In the name of communism, Mao Zedong put millions of people to death in China. Orwell believed that communism and freedom could not coexist. Although Marxism claims to free the people, freedom is actually eradicated. Communist regimes have complete control over what people read, watch, say, and think. Example: In the Soviet Union, the government had total control over radio and newspapers, and dissenting opinions were prohibited. To keep individuals from criticizing the Communist Party, the Chinese government continues to impose stringent Internet censorship. The core principle of Marxism, equal opportunity for all, is actually unachievable. The governing class in communist countries enjoys luxury while the general populace is subject to strict Regulations. This contradiction is seen in "Animal Farm," when the pigs become the ruling class despite the fact that all animals are treated equally following the revolution. Example: The top leaders of the Communist Party had access to everything in the Soviet Union, but common people had to wait in line for food and drink. The communist leadership in North Korea has access to all they require, while the general populace lives in poverty (Awan, & Raza, 2016).

### **According to Orwell: Can communism succeed?**

According to Orwell, communism will always fail, because:

- It promises equality and freedom, but in reality brings tyranny and dictatorship.
- It empowers a new ruling class instead of giving power to the people.
- It eliminates freedom of thought and speech.
- It creates a "closed and controlled" society instead of an open democratic society.
- It always gives rise to a new type of corrupt elite, which oppresses the common people.

George Orwell was a staunch opponent of Marx's communism and said that:

- Communism promotes tyranny and dictatorship in the name of revolution.
- Marxism's promise of equality and freedom is just a "deception".
- Communism has no concept of individual freedom and democracy.
- Communist rulers always keep power and wealth in their hands, while the people are in a Bad situation

## **Key findings**

### **Attempt to abolish the class system**

The aim of communism was to create a society where there was no rich or poor, owner or worker. That is, everyone was equal. This result was theoretically very attractive.

### **Collective ownership of the means of production**

Communism says that factories, land, machines, everything should be owned by the government or the people, not by any one person. This does not accumulate wealth in a few hands.

### **The theory of real remuneration for labor**

According to communism, the worker should get full reward for his labor, the capitalist should not benefit. That is, whoever works, gets that much.

### **Opposition to the capitalist system**

Communism considers capitalism to be the root of human exploitation and advocates its abolition.

### **The gradual abolition of the state (The End of State)**

When everyone in society becomes equal, according to Marx, there will be no need for government or the state, and it will automatically disappear.

### **Failure in practice**

When this theory was actually implemented in some countries of the world (such as the Soviet Union, China, Cuba), Freedom ended, the economy weakened, the state became more powerful, People became unhappy.

## **Conclusion**

Although Karl Marx's theory of communism has greatly influenced political thought around the world, it has also drawn a lot of criticism. Marx's notions of equality, the abolition of exploitation, and the establishment of a classless society may seem idealistic, but their actual application has frequently resulted in serious setbacks. Great communist ideals include equality, the eradication of extreme poverty and wealth, and universal access to healthcare and education. The core principles of communism are class conflict and the eradication of social inequity. Marx believed that history is a series of conflicts between different social classes, particularly the working class (proletariat) and the owning class (bourgeoisie). From a human perspective, this theory addresses the very real issues of poverty, exploitation, and inequality that have plagued societies for centuries. He envisioned a society in which all means of production would be owned collectively and the wealth produced would be shared equally among all individuals. In addition to being an economic model, Marx's vision was a call for human dignity, fairness, and justice. It was a dream of a world where no one would suffer due to another's greed and where everyone would have equal opportunities to live a decent life.

### **Recommendations**

- People also need the freedom to make their own decisions in life, such as what they want to study, where they want to work, and how they want to live.
- If the government controls everything alone, people will not be able to do anything new with their hard work and skills.
- Education and health are two sectors without which no country can develop. If a poor person cannot get education or treatment, he will be left behind.
- People's thinking, beliefs and methods are different. Any system is successful only when it is brought about with love, advice and gentleness. Force only creates fear, not development.
- It is unfair that those who work day and night, and those who do not work, are both equal.

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