

Social Science and Social Reality : A Quest¹

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ABSTRACT In social history thought processes reflect the changes in organization of production. The quest for reality is an ongoing phenomenon. How social science comprehends this complex social knowledge? In this context rigid cross-cultural theories and mechanistic models need scrutiny. Besides it is also essential to probe into philosophical and methodological under-pinnings in social sciences. Precisely as social reality is both objective and subjective and therefore any theoretical perspective demands the cognizance of this dialectical process. For concepts and constructs do not occur in vacuum. Accordingly social science not only owns the responsibility of contemplating and projected the intricate social processes but also finding possible means of change.

Human thought has been under a constant flux of change and been in progress along with the changes in the human organization of production and the struggles to replace the obsolete forms for a better future society. Accordingly both theoretical issues and politico-ideological struggles have become integral parts of the democratic process. Throughout human civilization all cultures contained an inherent potential for dynamics as per the social laws and customs. Inter and intra drifts eventually become near universal processes and these structural mechanisms depend on economy, polity and historical conditions. Rigid cross-cultural frames of references, tight taxonomic systems and incipient periodic tables only cramp the social reality. The quest for reality vs. myth, essence vs. existence and matter vs. mind has been subjecting the human intellect for critical probings, dates back to the invention of fire, the beginnings of human civilization.

What is reality and how social science helps understand the complex social knowledge and

how it mystifies and also reproduces according to variations in the historical conditions? These trivial issues necessitate for philosophical probings and methodological underpinnings in the social sciences. Precisely as knowledge is attained and reproduced not only through contemplation but also through activity (labour) and interaction with the people (social relations). Therefore we maintain that people and their ideas in the material production and the experience to praxis is very imperative, not being merely reflective, ultimately enriches the understanding of social reality through the social science. Social reality is both objective and subjective and thus any theoretical analysis requires the cognizance of this process which is an ongoing dialectical mechanism. In other words to be a member in the society is invariably to participate in its dialectic, the production and reproduction processes (This view is in juxtaposition with the individual perfection notion of knowledge inferred on self-evident premises of the seventeenth century classical thinkers like, Galileo, Descartes, Newton, Locke, Darwin, etc.). The apparent dialectical structures maintain balance with the environment and contain the internal dynamics of change. For, time is not an unitary flow the subsumes all epoches, rather is ultimately governed by the movement of history itself. This movement essentially is that of peoples and their control over nature, *i.e.* their environ and themselves.

From this social background the responsibility before the social science is to project conscientization and contemplation not only of the present but also of the possibilities inherent in the present for the future. In other words to provide a demystification of the social world in order to reveal the historically emergent and socio-culturally constituted bases of the present. Conceptualizations and constructions do not take place in a social vacuum as mere descriptions and abstractions but they are part of

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the social processes themselves. Generally viewing, the vital issues concerned in the society stretch and cut across different social science disciplines and humanities and therefore can raise the problems on generalization and interpretation which is rather endemic. Notwithstanding this variegation, the present geopolitical changes in the world clearly affect the social science and are far from immune to these forces. Thus the social scientists bear the urgency of not only interpreting the complex social dynamics but also finding possible ways to change the prevalent unjust order, that is to become the part of the struggles. In this way social science combines both the philosophical and empirical dimensions. However, we are aware of various limitations in the wider political developments, but the prevailing conditions are all the more stupendous than ever before. In the following pages we attempt to focus some of the major philosophical dimensions and their implications in search for social studies. At the very outset we do not claim scholastic rigour and perfection rather only reflections of internal dynamics.

Contemplating Social Reality

At the level of abstraction philosophy is concerned with the questions of actual world, be it physical or social. It is observed that even professional philosopher cannot answer (Ayer, 1976). While the scientists are in constant attempt to establish the kind of objects and their internal mechanics, the philosophy is concerned with the very issue of object, the notion of cause and ultimately knowledge itself. Briefly, "philosophy seeks the broad outlines of the whole system of the world" (Quine, 1978 : 178). The underlying presumption being that one can distinguish between the various forms and contents of knowledge. Consequently social science is endowed with *a priori* and *aposteriori* proposition in contemplating social reality. More often than not this intricate reality is perceived only in the form of *object*, but not as a human activity. This activity is labour as Marx clearly mentions that "it is just in his work upon the objective world... that men really proves himself to be a *species-being*. This production is his active species-life. Through this

production, nature appears, as his work and his reality. The object of labour is, therefore, the *objectification of man's species - life*, for he duplicates himself not only as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively in reality, and therefore he sees himself in a world that he has created" (Marx and Engels, 1975:277).

Thus follows the argument that human-species is traced from his/her objective relation to nature, *i.e.* the labour process, which in turn provides the master plan of human interaction with the environment (Callincos, 1983) for, the entire gamut of social life activity is essentially practical. Precisely the "society does not consist of individuals but expresses the sum of connections, the relations within which these individuals stand" (Marx, 1973:265). Practice is structured by these relations of production. Historically, in this very process value transforms every product of labour into a social hieroglyphic from which people decipher their values. Accordingly human labour becomes both redirective and transformative for, human relationship with nature is dynamic involving transformations, as human needs and capacities keep changing as labour process are in continuous motion in the social organization of production.

Contradictions : Bases of Social Fabric

In reality people encounter conflicts, tensions, struggles, etc. all culminating to different movements (workers', peasants', women's ecology, peace movement, etc.) and these are neither mere epiphenomena produced accidentally; nor incidental, but are very much inherent to class societies. This reality is historically specific. The ridden contradictions form the basis and moving principle in the social fabric. By coming of gripe with these historical actualities, the social science would be in a better position to understand social reality. The movement of reality after all is a dialectic process and the method becomes dialectical when the explanation of the movement of the object as an intellectual process and it is also part of the movement of the object (Larrain, 1986). However, this certainly does not imply crude economic reductionism. For instance, under specific historical concrete conditions the social being and

economic being are distinguishable, specially in the realm of culture. In other words dialectical thought cannot be just fixed mechanically as a set of formulas for everything happens not arbitrarily, but due to certain definite operating laws. However, these laws are not all-embracing and eternal.

While dialectics is the logic of movement and change, reality is full of contradictions, too elusive and manifold to derive a single set of formulas. For, each specific phase of reality has its own laws, own specific categories which are intertwined in reality. Apparently these categories cannot be simply deduced from the mind but from the material reality and are in constant motion. Therefore reality, rationality and necessity are systemistically and intimately associated at all times (Novack, 1971). Logically follows that dialectical approach is not only concerned of the living present but also of the creative future. It is concerned with the identification of hidden structures underlying the conscious behaviour of people. One of the concerns of social science is to reduce the conflicts between outward forms and the inner reality of focussing on their dislectical unity. Because knowledge progresses by probing beneath, behind and beyond appearances to ever deeper levels of real existence. This is feasible by treating social facts as historical forces integrated in the totality which produce the phenomena and its appearance. Objective forms of all phenomena change constantly in the course of their dialectical interaction with each other. For dialectical method presupposes the unity of subject and object in the constant historical production of social reality (Lukac's, 1971).

Concretization of Abstractions

The concretization of abstractions, their status as fact, is the beginning of the social analysis. Besides, abstract categories serve as concrete as they reflect the objective conditions. We reiterate that social science thinking (for instance sociological thinking) and social activity are inextricably linked with social reality and is both subjective and objective, the distinction being merely an abstraction, as there is no distinct sphere of consciousness independent of the socio-economic structure (Waiter, 1969). Thus

social science reflects the commitment in concerned areas/disciplines. Subsequently the methodological dimension in social science in an important factor that aids social inquiry.

More often than not methodology in social science connotes research techniques, tools, design and statistical elaborations, slanting away from qualitative science to the quantitative science where concepts dissolve into mere variables. The more the variables absorb a concept, the poorer becomes qualitatively with converse relation. The concept is an empirical if it can be operated in a testible proposition that confirms it ultimately. The reconstruction of concept involves the systematic construction of matrices of characteristics. It is with the help of concept we recognize the essence of phenomena and process and thus it is one of the forms of reflection of the world in the mind. Scientifically speaking the concept reconstruction invariably results from modification of relative ambiguity and incommunicability and thus it becomes imperative to restore the conceptual foundation of the edifice (Sartori, 1984).

However, the reconstruction is not an end in itself, nonetheless it is necessary in the social science. Here reconstruction includes the formation of concept between ambiguity (meaning) and undermotativeness (referent). The concept is an ultimate product of cognition arising from lower to higher levels, undergoing variations, defining and redefining its contours. Therefore concept is neither static and final, nor absolute, but is a continuous process in a constant development to reflect the social realities and thus it "must be hewn, treated, flexible, mobile, relative, mutually connected, united in opposites, in order to embrace the world" (Lenin, 1967 : 146). Accordingly things that exist independently of use are reflected in our minds as ideas or thought. As a result these objective existences as well as our conceptions are in a constant state of flux by overcoming contradictions i.e. the negations.

Extra-linguistic Modes of Communication

This necessarily means browsing the concerned gamut of literature to extract characteristics, operational definitions by enumeration into a meaningful kind of organization. This

does not mean that the operational definitions are loose terms, but are narrowly intended, as definitions that restrict themselves to possible measurement operations and thus to the properties that lend themselves to actuality (Bridgman, 1927) uncovering the *sui generis* nature of operational definitions. In other words operational definitions are extralinguistic modes of communication systems assuming abstraction from concrete. In this context we highlight some philosophico-methodological premises of rationalism, empiricism, realism and new social realism for understanding social reality.

It is observed that regularities by the social world are little more than the surface and the social inquiry brings reason in specificity. In this process rationalism aims for coherent social world with possible logistics without distorting the given empirical phenomena which is concerned with combinations and permutations, than causality, with the concrete than the absolute. The rationalist heritage dates as early as seventeenth century which upholds universality and necessity, arguing that the logical attributes of true knowledge cannot be deduced from experience and generalization, but from the mind. For instance Kantian thought argues that sensations arise from the action of unknowable "thing-in-itself" and are then arranged on *a priori* forms of space and time and the reason basing on unity, plurality, causality, necessity, etc. The emphasis is on reason which assumes things as they appear, knowledge is not limited to platonic objects and the concepts provide insights to understand the world (Williams, 1967). This approach influenced Durkheim, Freud, Levi-Strauss, Mannheim, Piaget and Weber who held that contemporary social theory has descended straight from Galilean and neo-Kantian thought and sociology should study society as a specific form of spiritual reality from common ideas. Following Kant rationalists assume that world is organized in a logical manner and it can be displayed through theories and the social world is open which can be brought under control only in appearance (Bhasker, 1979; Berger, 1981). Rationalism uses formalist methodology by being logical, mathematical and go beyond and object for possibilities. According to this approach possi-

bilities are quite real, no matter if they are not realized. The mass of appearances hides timeless structural elements which can be combined and recombined. For historical accidents the reality of contradictions may not necessarily be present at the level of appearances (Althusser, 1970).

Logical Relationship of Empirical Data

Accordingly experience is usually confused and requires analytic analysis for rationalists. Empirical data is interpreted not according to the depiction of specific events but by their logical relationship (Levi-Strauss, 1975). Further this view holds that the social science studies individual aspects of various phenomena by substituting the arbitrary notion of an "ideal type" by systematizing individual facts and other observable phenomena are used to understand the reality. Structure remains immutable despite changes of the parts and the whole itself, the complete cognition of its organic. The underlying assumption is that absolute universality and necessity is given to the appearances by preceding experience and the statements of the mind are absolutely independent of experience contrary to empiricism. Needless to mention that rationalism was influenced by the experimentation method and the political environment of 20th century. The social world according to rationalists consists of a set of arrangements resulting due to specific variations and logical probabilities (Berger, 1981). The logistics involved aim at unconditional assertion of the absolute identity, the dogma. Further the stress on formal logic presumes eternal reasons, manifested in nature, society and the human mind and regards reason as static, unconditioned and eternal. Thus rationalism upholds the static universe and subjective idealism, *i.e.* nothing exists except one's self. Be that as it may complex social issues cannot be simply dispensed with idealistic and individualistic overtones converging on mysticism, in search of fallacies.

In contrast of rationalism, empiricism argues that sensory experience is the only source of knowledge and stresses that all knowledge is founded and obtained through the sum total of sensations and notions. Its tradition dates back

to Keynesian macroeconomics to political maturation paradigm to deterrence studies in criminology. According to empiricism truth flows primarily "upwards" from particular observation = statements to the general statements... while for the rationalists it has flowed "downwards" from general laws and principles to the particular...." (Toulmin, 1972 : 68). Subsequently empiricism treats social relations between people as things reducing them to roles the objects. For social behaviour is analyzed from ontological point of view, assuming the existence of the world outside the mind. For them the world is governed by rules and the task of the social science is to discover this order. The notion at the outset is a historical and deterministic, simply because we cannot indulge in perfect prediction for inferring laws to generalizations in social contexts.

Overusage of Statistical Analysis

Prediction does not necessarily lead to causation or explanatory knowledge as social relations are not simple functional equations that can be conveniently convoluted into statistical multivariates. Thus the world view followed is akin to architect plan with arrays of correlated phenomena, while rationalism, search for concrete events or abstract units. Here comes the overusage of statistical analysis and mathematical models in a bid to get over empirical irregularities. More often, the customary statistical usage in social science finally results in minimization of theory and as well as empirical complexity, by reducing theoretical issues to mere relations and variables. It is little wonder at times categories and variables seldom bear statistical relationship to other variables. In the process statistical models are reduced to mere empirical resumes to explain the complex social reality; for statistical tools in themselves cannot describe the complex structures. In the context of formal methodology, rationalism is viewed by empiricists as informed guess work, speculations and metaphysical devoid of scientific method of social reality (Sorokin, 1928). It is a truism that econometric models look impressive and elegant in their mathematical precision (like multiple regressing, multivariate analysis of variance, structural equations, ca-

nomical correlation, etc.) and if appropriate caution is not taken, there is a risk of opaque analysis (Sechrest, 1985). However, this is not to deny the importance of statistics in social sciences rather what is required is the assessment of the quality of social statistics and the context. Precisely as social reality is far from quantitative diagrams and the number reflections, sometimes the elegance of these models are projected at the cost of unrealistic and conservative simplifying assumptions in the context of policy relevance (Pettigrew, 1985). The frequent hallowed economic indicator GNP continues long after policy decision based on the then available data on GNP with the long gap of time factor, eventually one is confused whether GNP is up or down (Morgenstern, 1963). Per capita estimate the relative inequality of the societies indifferent geographic societies, with different organizations of production and the like. Therefore what is needed is the degree of reliance on statistics and mathematical models for policy purposes. Because social science on the whole can influence either covertly the nature and direction of social policy and can promote social justice (of course without manipulation and misrepresentation of social reality) *albeit* limitations.

Emphasis on Fidelity to Truth of Life

Besides the above mentioned methods of social comprehension, realism presupposes historically concrete reflection of reality in progression which has originated in the twentieth century capitalist times. Here the emphasis is on the fidelity to the truth of life and humanism. In brief it is the being of things as opposed to non-being. Reality is viewed as being of something essential in a given thing, matter (Rosenthal and Yudin, 1967). It is argued that "the ideal is nothing but the material world reflected in the mind of men, and translated into the forms of thought" (Marx, 1971 : 102). Matter is a philosophical category denoting the objective reality, which exists independently reflecting in consciousness "which is copied, photographed and reflected by our sensations, while existing independently of thought" (Lenin, 1947 : 116). In other words matter is the infinite plurality of existing phenomena, objects, systems and

forms of motion as it exists in the infinite variety of concrete structures.

Essentially realism is in contrast to existentialism in which the philosophical premise of the latter proceeds from the principle of antithesis of subject and object. Basically it is of twofold, *i.e.* independent of nature and the logical character of existence and incorporation of the ideas with phenomena. The enormous intricacy of the social reality is that the aspect of differentiation generates possible multiplicity of concrete historical events in a totality. Subsequently the concrete reality is unity in contradiction, whose contradictions undergo historical changes, *i.e.* both evolutionary and revolutionary and this process can be analyzed through dialectical logic. Accordingly individuals act on pre-existing social structure so as to transform or reproduce them. One of the acts of transformation is material production and therefore any study of social reality needs to take the cognition of production process. However this does not imply mere economic and technological determinism on the related issues like ecology, human rights, women, culture, etc. For each class within a given relations of production contains a definite conception of the world which are inherent in the practice of that particular class (Gramsci, 1971:57). Social changes and historical development are conditioned by structural factors and can be explained in terms of human practices and various democratic movements.

Historical Conditioning of Contradictions

Accordingly we submit that notwithstanding the recent socio-political changes historical materialist method of social contemplation has potential in the realm of social science. We reiterate that any theory can become recalcitrant and eventually cannot survive only on the basis of rigorous *ad hominem* argumentation and scholastic metaphysics devoid of the principle of practice. Precisely as contradictions are historically conditioned, dialectic is not independent and objective movement of the material world, but inextricably related to class antagonisms and practices. However, historical progress does not mean unilateral and unilinear path, rather it is multilateral with possible mu-

tations and combinations (Marx and Engels, 1975:293). In historical materialism the concept of practice attains a pivotal place and it transforms not only natural environment but also people. While humans "make their own history" under circumstances created by them, however they can change and transform the circumstances. In essence materialist method unifies people and nature, social and material, subjects and structures, consciousness and reality (Larrain, 1986). Though all consciousness is determined socially, simultaneously all cannot be ideological. Because ideology denotes a kind of distorted consciousness concealing contradictions and thus objectively helps to reproduce them. Coming to the realm of practice, though ideas are produced in the context of practice, ideas can be either *real* or *illusory* (Marx and Engels, 1973 : 36). It is important to note here that historical materialism does not presuppose the liquidation of the individual in the process of collectivism; quite contrarily it aims at the free movement of individual freedom. For everything is in dialectical motion. Dialectics as desideratum upholds the dialectical movement of the empirical phenomena to combinatory principles and the logic governing those principles and again back to empirical phenomena as being necessitated by those principles and logic (Sylvan and Glassner, 1987). This is to say that while *empiricists* start from phenomena to abstraction, the *rationalists* in reverse gear, the *materialists* combine both. In this way the analyses of structure with context, similarities with differences and eventually unmasking alternations among appearances and realities contribute to the richness of social thought (Paci, 1972). According to materialism parts are not contained in wholes, but are as containing wholes (Ollman, 1971). For empiricists parts are simply empirical resumes, while for rationalists wholes are structures within which parts meticulously fit. For materialists the process is far more intricate involving the scrutiny of similarities and differences throughout the structure.

New Social Realism

There is yet another methodological branch known as new social realism based on

structuration model distinguishing between structures and systems across time and space (Giddens, 1981). Accordingly the proponents opine that organization of social practices is recursive and thus structure is outcome of practices and stress on contradiction as structural component of social system where two structural principles depend on one another while negating each other. Further it is also stated that human action is basic to the social, distinguished from the natural world where people operate in social world and that there exists a "double articulation of social structure and human praxis" (Bhaskar, 1983 : 84). In brief the new social realists outrightly reject ethno-methodology, symbolic interactionism hermeneutics and empiricism and observe that interpretation is not restricted to mere intentions, since structures with variations always entail multiple interpretations (Sylvan and Glassner, 1983). The main problem with this school is that the social phenomenon is reduced to conventional concepts and variables mechanistically and fails to cognize the dynamics of inherent logical social reality. According to them meanings are the parts of social orders; meanings in themselves are part of structures and the issue is rearrangement of these structures. Consequently the empirically observable facts are nothing but the manifestations in themselves generating deeper structures (Bhaskar, 1979 : 90), *i.e.* the notion of transcendence. Further, the proponents of this approach maintain that as material production is one of the forces of reproducing, it is important to study the social relations around production. In their analyses of social reality the new social realists only selectively incorporate materialist notions and remain silent regarding the creation of value in the process. Because the significance of transformation denotes the very new, the created and not merely transformed or reproduced. For them the structures are the rules and resources in the social systems, but are in "virtual existence" as they are produced and reproduced in social interaction as its medium and are non-temporal and non-spatial. Besides the new social realists emphasize on contradiction as a structural component of social system and maintain that

the system operates in negation. Thus they argue that human action is not voluntaristic, indeterministic or truly constitutive; actions transform the world and people are not spectators, but the active agents. It is clear that the protagonists of this approach are *sui generis* selectively incorporating Marx, Durkheim, Weber and Levi-Strauss, but presenting with Marxist overtones. For them the observable behaviour of people and objects is unintelligible unless examined in the context of the hidden structures of which it reveals (Callincos, 1983). In essence the new social realism is concerned with "semantico-ontological objectivity" which assumes that thought mirrors the reality. The premises are prone inherently to idealism and epistemological anarchism basing on how the mind constructs representations (Rorty, 1980 : 294).

Knowledge Reproduced Continuously

It is a fact that the theories or models can be further accentuated to the best of our knowledge in understanding social reality, as tools for transcendence. Accordingly the prevailing conditions of the political economy reinforces ideological values in the intellectuals and thus the academia enjoy a privileged position in social division of labour in a contemplative relationship to the social world. Because the production of knowledge is a social activity, *i.e.* linguistic, conceptual, cultural and material. Knowledge exists in the form of data, existing literature and above all with the people. It is reproduced or transformed and never created out of nothing, a resource in various forms, ever present and reproduced continuously. Knowledge is social depending on the human labour and the latter is the most transformative relationship between people and nature, a material process and a conscious one which cannot be reduced to mere physical labour or a passive contemplation. This is not to deny the centrality of labour power in social progress.

We only maintain that where new social relations develop, people develop new corresponding ideas and accordingly make and remake their own history and "they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves but under

circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past" (Marx 1971:31). In other words any contemplation of social reality consciously or unconsciously, scientific or lay, treating people as objects of history and simple transmitters of knowledge than active participators is not only misleading but also misrepresenting the actuality. Precisely as subject — object relationship lies on equivalent horizontal plane. However, contemplating social phenomena is not a simple question of analyzing practices and concepts, but has a material dimension. This framework of analysis requires not merely amassing empirical data but also philosophical basis for "understanding concepts in society and how they change therefore requires an understanding of the material practices and circumstances associated with them" (Sayer, 1984 : 35-36). The interdependency between subjects and objects, the conceptual and the empirical, praxis and prognosis of knowledge is very intricate. No doubt the social world can be understood through conceptual frameworks, but certainly concepts alone do not determine the structure of social reality. Societies are structures of social relations in the production and reproduction process. The functioning of these structures as entities maintaining themselves in their relation both with the outside environment (human and nature) and the symbiotic relations between the two explains how societies change and transform.

Philosophical Premises of Materialism

Therefore the application of the mechanical models cannot explain this intricate social dynamics, rather only simplify the historical changes. The distinctions, forms and appearances of these structures retain their significance, for the analysis and explanation of these realities are historically specific. For instance under capitalism the exchange value and the social relations take a different turn as the workers produce not for direct consumption. It is this commodity form responsible for the enigma (Marx, 1971 : I). Thus the relation between people takes place on the illusory appearance in commodity production, a specificity of capitalist relations. The objective forms in capitalism (the relation between objects) are nothing

but specific social realities, *i.e.* "if ... we bear in mind that the value of commodities has a purely social reality, and that they acquire this reality only in so far as they are expressions or embodiments of one identical social substance, *viz.* human labour, it follows as a matter of course, that value can only manifest itself in the social relations of commodity to commodity" (Marx, 1971:47). Thus each relationship is an appearance whose reality is only articulated by integrating it theoretically within its social structure. The philosophical premises of materialism seeks for the liberation of human kind and therefore materialist dialectics is inseparable from humanism.

The main thrust of this present paper is that materialist premises possess the potential to contemplate social reality specially in the context of the third world countries with alarming inequalities and domination of national and international forces, if used systematically and contextually, shelling out dogma. This necessarily implies to abandon simplistic and monoistic assumptions and indulging in an ongoing quest for praxis and theory. Of recently the issue "crisis in social science" (be it Marxist or *vice-versa*) in itself speaks volumes regarding various theoretical and methodological debates, promises a positive future. Subsequently cognitive scientists are working with ingenious research designs and computer programmes in a bid to solve human problems while issues regarding subjectivism, objectivism, relativism, positicism, metaphysics, etc. and the theories like ethnomethodology and phenomenology (also Marxist phenomenology) are being revisited, which cannot be dispensed simply as pedantic. As is known, the literature in this regards has reached to mammoth heights. We find the proliferation of different approaches in social thought like, phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical theory, ethnomethodology, while on the other hand attempts have been made to review symbolic interactionism, structuralism and poststructuralism. Space and scope of the paper simply does not permit us to delve on these critical approaches.

II

In its concreteness structural reality in the

third world is characterized by infusion and importation of capitalism, *i.e.* its consumer culture, free market economy, technologies and obtruded development. The precapitalist economic structures are being systematically incorporated by restructuring the complicated network of capitalism. At the level of generality it appears from the past historical experiences that capitalism is able to survive and sustain the brink of collapse due to its opened reforms within the capitalist framework to insure its continuity as well as expansion. It is an established fact that there is a global economic crisis in the third world countries, which is historically conditioned. These countries face falling economic output, increasing unemployment, alarming foreign debt and subsequently stubborn inflation. The present economic crisis is of international and national in nature, leading to mounting inequalities between and among nations, regions, classes and gender. There is a new shift towards neo-exploitation through transnational corporations where Bretton Woods institutions dictate terms and conditions. Larger firms smalgamate smaller ones, privatization is top, workers are retrenched and marginalized hither to comfortable middle classes experience the demoting living standards, in one word dehumanization of the people is on rise. Besides, imperialism penetrates into the third world countries through its powerful tentacles of different organizations and committees (UNDP, UNCTAD, UNIDO, etc.) Many countries are being "adjusted" under pressure to the new political world order of imperialism. Human value is measured by individual accumulation of wealth. More often than not domestic policies are prescribed from North. The recent Dunkel Draft, besides IMF and WB formats reflect the international power structure. Over the past few decades the per capita income in the third world has increased despite high population growth. Despite such "growth rates" the standard of living levels have considerably fallen. The World Bank views it due to low productivity, low investment and poor technology, while for the state it is due to insecure political structure. For the leftists the crisis is embedded in the nature of capitalism and the domination of imperialism. Be that as it may be the fact is that for the vast

masses this is a daily struggle for survival. Vital life support systems in the third world are being dislodged and subsequently in the absence of symbiotic biological balance disease and pests are destroying the crops. Soil contamination and water pollution are destroying the non-renewable water sources. It is observed that every year 60,000 sq. km of land area is transforming into desert (Idris, 1988). On the other side the sophisticated science and technology is colonizing farming, food manufacturing, even packaging and pharmaceuticals yielding the High Tech Holocaust (with toxic chemical compounds in return). The past decade has been a disaster for the world's poor from the environmental and ecological point of view with increased inequities besides untold human suffering and are by no means an accidents and are thus rooted in a blatant disrespect for the rights of livelihood of common people and in the mechanical approach to economic development which keeps profit over progress. It has been observed that trillion dollars of debt is created by the North in the recent trade (it is still more now) and further threatens to erode the quality of life of the poor on this planet in the 21st century (Barton, 1989). The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have once again reaffirmed their commitment to a "healthy environment and the eradication of poverty" to compromise the international debt crisis. The result is the markets in the North are almost sinking and the countries from the South have become official lenders to the Northern investors, together (the rich of the South and the North) are depleting the forests, polluting and marginalizing the people. Apparently neither the concerned international agencies nor the governments care to inform the people about the resultant environmental alterations in which the people live and work. The immediate losers in this equation are the underprivileged women, the industrial and agricultural workers. Precisely the capitalist development has reduced women's employment potential, devalued the work processes, marginalized the small peasants, leading to male migration and subsequently increasing the work load of women (struggling for food, fuel, fodder and water). This is inspite of high rate of participation of

women in agricultural activities and there is hardly any programme to elivate from the bottom. Further the notion of work in its heights of contemporary capitalism has not only distorted but also devalued subsequently leading to dehumanization. Development programmes specially in agricultural sector are concerned with the technical changes in the production increase and attempts are often made to alleviate the "poverty line" through income generation. The sexual division of labour is restructured in the larger political economy of agrarian relations and its market connection has specific bearings on the women's workforce in agriculture giving rise to subsistence production. Here the subsistence production implies that the sale of labour and the subsequent services of the teeming people is simply not sufficient for their survival, *i.e.* it does not cover the reproduction costs (Mies, 1986).

In concluding the analysis we submit that in the process of comprehending social reality in its explicit content, thought reflects material reality in implicit forms and in turn this concatenation of thought and action further throws light on ideas that decipher reality. The entire process involves debate and criticism and logical conception of contradictions. The social science bears the responsibility of informing the people and disseminate data on the existing conditions through social research so as to reach the depths of the new frontiers of theory and praxis. This is but indispensable for future social vision as social science can help enable to frame social policies. Otherwise social inquiry will generate only an arrested intellectual process and conceptual poverty. Apparently this reflects the relationship of the social science and the society at large. Accordingly we assume that social science cannot be neutral, for political is very much inherent either through conditioning as per the predominant socio-cultural values by legitimizing the *status quo* or being critical critique of the prevailing unjust social order and its power relations. More often domination of cultural imperialism generates "culture of silence" by the dominating and the pre-determined reality package is forced upon the dominated through the medium of education (Freire, 1972). For scientific conceptions, so-

cial, economic, political and ideological spheres become integral in social research and this methodology necessitates concrete historical examination of the object of research and people as subjects in the process. Therefore the aim of information is not merely to record fact or event but also to interpret them. By way of summation we reaffirm that there is no historical reality which is not human and there is no history without people, for there is only history of people made by them and to remake them in turn. The rectification of the objective form in which the social order seems is only the representation of an ideological distortion or mystification of the socio-historical process. The paramount question before the social scientists is not the neutral participation in the social process, but rejecting the taken-for-granted mechanical approaches and liberation from dogmatism towards emancipation. Ignoring this necessarily means veering from the reality. The vast majority are denied the right to live, right to participate in history as subjects and are alienated eventually as objects in the concrete situation and this seems to be nothing but the objective reality. To recapitulate our argument albeit imbroglia and conceptual quagmire, there exists a dialectical concatenation between the social science, social concern and social reality. The question is, should the social science be concerned only with academics and professionalism or go beyond, *i.e.* towards liberation of human kind? Obviously the answer is difficult, but certainly not impossible.

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