

CHAPTER-VI

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION THOUGHTS OF ŚAṆKARADEVA AND KARL MARX

Śaṅkaradeva (1449—1568) and Karl Marx (1818-1883) were two great social thinkers separated by time and places. While Śaṅkaradeva was in Assam, Karl Marx was in Germany. The motto of Śaṅkaradeva was to establish an egalitarian society through devotion because the saint believed that *bhakti* or devotion is the ultimate route to salvation. He also believed that God is equal to everyone and there should not be any stratification in the way to access God. On the other hand, Karl Marx advocated a classless and stateless society through a proletarian or workers revolution. Marx believed that in a society, class struggle or class conflict is an integral part. Therefore, Marx argued for economic security, social or national development and freedom for self-expression. Indeed, the methods, means, context of social change of these two social thinkers are different. But behind their thoughts on social change, there was the commonality of the greater objective. Both of them wanted to establish an egalitarian society for the greater interest of the common masses. In this process both the thinkers opted for a practical strategy. Both Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx tried to investigate the real nature of society and then offered their ideas on social change. Both of them put emphasis on the value of human being and extend and establish their philosophy of social reconstruction from individual to the community level.

6.1: Some Important Areas of Comparison between Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx on the Philosophy of Social Reconstruction:

6.1.1: Philosophical Foundation:

‘It is the common phenomenon that the world around human being is either material or ideal or spiritual. The material objects and phenomena include everything that exists independently. On the other hand, the sphere of mental activity like thought, sensations and emotion etc are related to the sphere ideal and spiritual. The character of this connection and the relation of thought to being on the spiritual to the material constitute the fundamental questions of philosophy’¹. To answer the questions of philosophy, Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx were adherent two different ideologies i.e., idealism and materialism.

Table 6.1

The Philosophical basis of Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx

Sl.	Śaṅkaradeva	Karl Marx
1	Spiritualism, Moral Collectivism and <i>Kṛṣṇa bhakti</i> .	Dialectical Materialism and Economic Determinism and Scientific Socialism

Table 6.1 directly indicates the philosophical basis of differences between Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx, where Śaṅkaradeva’s philosophical formulations are based on spiritualism, moral collectivism and *Kṛṣṇa bhakti* or devotion. On the other hand, Karl Marx’s philosophical formulations are based on dialectical materialism, economic determinism and scientific socialism.

¹ Henna, George. (Ed.). (1968). *Marxist Philosophies*. p.10.

Similarly, Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx cherished difference of thoughts on the relative conception of God and Truth. It can be projected in the following manner.

Table 6.2

Relative Conception of God and Truth

SL	Philosophy of	Truth	God	Belief	Critical Reflection
1	Śaṅkaradeva	Truth is God	God is Truth	Believes in God and Religious Ethics	Monism/Dualism
2	Karl Marx	Truth is not God	God is not Truth	Neither believes in God nor in Religious Ethics	Atheism/Realism

The spiritual philosophy of Śaṅkaradeva has its root in *advaitavāda* and *viśiṣṭādvaitavāda* of Saint Śaṅkarācārya and Rāmānuja. Śaṅkarācārya says-

ślokardhena prabakṣāmi yaduktam granthakoṭibhiḥ/

brahma satyam jagnmithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ/²

It means- what thousands of religious books have explained, I can express it with a half of the *Ślokā* that *Brahma* is the truth, the whole universe is false and *Jīvo or* soul is nothing but *Brahma* itself. Rāmānuja adds the *Bhakti* component to his interpretation of *Brahmasūtra*. According to Śaṅkaradeva also *Brahma* is the truth and to realize that *Brahma* there is a specific way. The saints advocates *Avatāravāda*

² www.sanskritdocument.org.madhavananda.swami. (2017). *Vivekchuḍāmanih*.verse.20.Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama. >accessed on 18/4/2017.

here and by chanting of and listening to the stories of *Kṛṣṇa* in his various *avatāras* or incarnations *one* can realize *Brahma*.

In Śaṅkaradeva's spiritual philosophy, *Brahman* is the supreme truth, *Brahman* and *Īśvara* (God) are the same, *Brahman* (God) is there in every entity, *Īśvara* (God) and his creation are not different and *Jīva* (creature) is a component of *Īśvara* (God). Śaṅkaradeva believes that the creation is temporary, but not real, *Māyā* (illusion) is an act of God and its influence can only be avoided by his grace and one becomes the part of God as one realizes the identity of God and his creation.

On the other hand, the philosophical foundation of Karl Marx was the dialectical materialism and scientific socialism. Karl Marx borrowed the dialectical method from German philosopher G.W.F.Hegel (1770-1831) and combined it with his materialism. Karl Marx's dialectical materialism has been based on matter and it was considered the essence of the universe, where the matter underwent the dialectical process of perfect material conditions and class conflict was the manifestation of this process. Marx believed that the social institution was the manifestation of changing material condition. He also believed that any stage of social life represents the corresponding material conditions. The main subject matter of Marx's philosophy was the solution to the fundamental question of philosophy and its relation with the consciousness being. Therefore, the Marxist philosophy answered this question scientifically and consistently. Hence, Marx criticized speculative philosophy that was equating metaphysics with ideology. Marx attempted to separate key findings from ideological biases. Therefore, the philosophy of Karl Marx was known as dialectical

materialism. It is materialistic because in solving the fundamental question of philosophy, it proceeds from the premise that matter and being are primary and consciousness is secondary. It recognizes the materiality of the world and studies the world in its reality.

Hence, Marx examined the material world in constant motion, development and regeneration. His explanation of social change and development accorded the privilege to the economic factor over other factors. Specifically, Marx gave prime importance to the forces of production (the tools and instrument) and the relation of production (the way in which human beings organize themselves to use the production forces). Marx believed that in all societies, where the productive forces or means of production are owned by a minority than relations of production are exploited and the majority is forced to work for subsistence pay. Marx said that the expansion of the productive forces determines society's relations of production. The relations of production, though, do influence the pace and direction of economic development comprises the real foundation of society.

6.1.2: Attitude towards Class:

In general, class means 'an aggregate of people who have the same status, rank or common characteristics. Simply, it is an aggregate of people, which is identified on the basis of their relationship.'³ The attitude towards classes and recommended relation between classes by Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx's have been mentioned in the following table-

³ Rawat, K.H.(2010).*Sociology –Basic Concepts*.p.186.

Table: 6.3
Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx on Class

Sl.	Philosophy of	Basis	Recommended relation between Classes
1	Śaṅkaradeva	Based on Mental Outlook	Class Cooperation
2	Karl Marx	Division of Society into owners and non-owners of means of Social Production	Class Conflict.

From the above mentioned table, it is seen that Śaṅkaradeva's thoughts on classes are equal and based on the mental outlook which can be acquired through *Kṛṣṇa bhakti*. In this process there is no difference between man and other animals. On the other hand, Karl Marx's thoughts on classes were based on the inherent social existence of class conflict. The society is divided into two categories - owners and non-owners which are determined by means of material production. There always is the scope for class conflict in such a society.

Regarding class equality, Śaṅkaradeva in his work *Kīrttana-ghoṣā* boldly has stated that-

*brāhmaṇara cāṇḍālara nibicāri kula/
dātāta corata yena dr̥ṣṭi ekatula.*⁴

It means- There should not be any discrimination between *Brāhmaṇa* and *Cāṇḍāla* – terms referring to upper and lower castes. Attention and importance should be alike towards donors and thieves.

⁴ *Kīrttana-ghoṣā, Śrī Kṛṣṇara vaikuṇṭha prayāṇa*. v .1821

Again, he writes -

*kukura sṛgāla garddabharo atmārāma/
jāniyā savāko pari karibā praṇāma//⁵*

It means- bow unto the dog, the ass and the jackal, knowing it well that their souls are but the supreme soul.

Śaṅkaradeva as a social reformer tried to disseminate the message of equality – the inherent fundamental principle of *bhakti* cult to the common people. It was because he realized the evil consequences of the caste amongst the existing Assamese people. He therefore denounced the caste structure of the society. Therefore, Śaṅkaradeva writes-

*caṇḍāle kariche hari kīrtana/
buliyā nindai yiṭo ajñajana//
tāka sambhāṣaṇa yi jane karai/
ājanmara puṇya tekhane harai //⁶*

It means- only a fool may be there to denounce singing of *Hari Nāma* as the outcaste's nuisance. If a man shows honour to a fool as such, he loses all his virtues gained since birth.

Again, Śaṅkaradeva tried to lead men to the topmost heights of paradise through love for mankind. Śaṅkaradeva's thoughts of the class were based on the same footing, irrespective of caste or status distinction, from a *brāhmaṇa* to a *cāṇḍala*, the

⁵ *Ibid.* v.1823

⁶ *Ibid, Pāṣaṇḍa-marddana.* v.88

scholar and the common man and rich and the poor. With the objective of establishing equality among the people, Śaṅkaradeva dreamt of a new liberal social order through the institution of the *Nāmghar* or prayer hall, which served as the community centre of the villagers, spiritual intellectual and for cultural activities. To establish a classless society, Śaṅkaradeva's thoughts put more priority on the devotion of humanism and humanity and emphasized on toleration to all creatures.

On the other hand, Karl Marx's basis of classes was on the division of society, where owners and non-owners or haves and have nots are the means of social production. Marx believed that man is a class animal. According to him in the primitive time, there was no classes. Peoples were consuming nature's bountiful productions for the satisfaction of their wants. Inequality was a myth. Gradually, with the growth of population, the difference came into being and divided the society into several classes. Marx writes- 'society divides him-self into classes, the privileged and dispossessed, the exploiters and exploited the rulers and the ruled'.⁷

Again, Marx believed that a social class occupied a fixed place in the process of production. Therefore, he said, 'in modern society, there are three great classes based on their respective sources of income. These are the owners of mere labour-power, the owners of capital and the landlords. Their respective sources of income are wages, profit and ground rent. In other words, large labourers, capitalist and landlords form the three classes of modern society resting upon the capitalist mode of

⁷ Marx, Karl. & Engels, F. (1848). *The Communist Manifesto*.p.4.

production.’⁸ Thus, Marx’s concept of the class was plain and simple, which was based on class struggle. This class and class struggle was a moving power of history that has paved its way to a revolution aiming at the end of prehistory and the establishment of a non- hostile society. In favour of it, in *the Communist Manifesto* (1848) Marx and Engels writes-‘freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now, open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes’.⁹

Hence, Marx proved that ‘the existence of classes was only bound up with particular historic phases of production. It necessarily leads to the dictatorships of the proletariats and the dictatorships itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and a classless society.’¹⁰ However, the concept of Karl Marx’s classes are-

- Based on the relation to the means of production.
- Concentrated to the means of production and distribution in the hands of a minority. This minority classes have the monopoly of private property and capture the political power for oppressing vast masses of people and exploit them economically.
- Rapid polarization of classes. Due to excessive exploitation of ruled classes, by bourgeoisie, the proletariats become paupers. The bourgeoisie grows rich at the

⁸ *Ibid.* p.5.

⁹ Marx, Karl. & Engels, F. (1848).*The Communist Manifesto*. Pp.12-13

¹⁰ Kar, P.K. (2003).*Conflict and Society*.p.29.

cost of expropriation. It creates a minority of owners of means of production and they enjoy a luxurious life. On the contrary, the proletariat class failed to meet the barest necessities of life.

- The antagonistic groups develop class consciousness and solidify their base. The workers begin to form trade unions against bourgeoisies. These classes always strive to keep up the rate of wages. As a result economic crisis of the proletariat becomes a clue and a violent revolution break out. It smashes the edifice of the capitalist society. This violent revolution throws the capitalist out of their power with their property seized from them and the working class control over the means of production as political power, and
- The dictatorships of the proletariat can initiate a transition to a classless society. In this society, everybody owns everything and each individual utilizes his ability and accept per their need.

Thus, Karl Marx's interpretations of all social activities of human beings were based on the economic concept. Therefore, Karl Marx believed in a classless society, where everybody owns ability and accepts in accordance with their need. With the overthrow of capitalism, social ownership of means of social production and universal labour leads to the fullest development of technology.

6.1.3: Attitude towards Religion:

Religion is a set of beliefs that are practiced by an individual. Thus, religion indicates human behaviour with spiritual conduct. The views of Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx on the role of religion in society is summarised in the following table-

Table 6.4**Role of Religion**

Sl	Philosophy of	Religious – Conversion & Proselytization	Critical Reflection
1	Śaṅkaradeva	Śaṅkaradeva does not approve religious proselytization and conversion	Religion is significant and a moralizing force.
2	Karl Marx	Marx rejects religion but does not deny the effect of religion in society	Religion is not significant. He said it is the opium of people.

From the above table, it is clear that the Śaṅkaradeva's attitude towards religion is positive. Śaṅkaradeva's thought on religion is that it is a moralizing force. He believes in the transformational ability of religion. For him it is not mere a set of rituals, rather a socio-ethical force. He therefore calls for equal respect for all religion. Therefore, Śaṅkaradeva's religion *Eka Śaraṇa Hari Nāma Dharma* was the most liberal, tolerant, simplest and easiest way of attaining God. Again it is called the religion of common man, where there is no room for any hostility between the rich and the poor in the name of religion.

On the other hand, Marx's view on religion was deeply influenced by German classical philosopher Feuerbach book *-The Essence of Christianity*, where Feuerbach book analyzes a materialistic critique of religion and proclaimed that nature existed independently on the human mind and there is nothing outside nature of men and that the supreme beings created by men's religious imagination. He writes-‘you believed in love as a divine attitude, because you yourself love, you believe that God is a wise,

a benevolent being because you regard goodness and reasons as your best qualities. Hence, God is the essence of man, seen as the highest truth'.¹¹ Therefore, Marx followed his ideas about the origin of religion and said- 'the criticism of religion ends with the teaching that man is the highest being for man, hence with the categorical imperative to overthrow all religion, in which man is debased, enslaved, forsaken, despicable being'.¹²

The attitude of Karl Marx towards religion is reactionary. He believed it as an instrument for the spiritual oppression, the ideological enslavement of the working people and a means of strengthening the rule of the exploiters. In favour of Karl Marx his friend F. Engels wrote- 'religion is a distorted, fantastic reflection of reality. All religion, however, is nothing but the fantastic reflection in men minds of those external forces which control their daily life'.¹³

Again, Marx believed that religion was developed at a definite stage in societal development. The origin of religion has been traced to ignorance of the true causes of natural and social phenomena. Fundamentally; religion is a belief in the supernatural. Man is more dependent on natural forces and endowed with supernatural properties, which made them gods and spirit, devils and angels. For example, according to Marx, the primitive man naively believed that these supernatural beings are not pacified and inflict harm and suffering on them. Therefore, these societies placated and worshipped so that it could help the people. The religious worship arose, a combination of prayers,

¹¹ Feuerbach, L. (1904) *Das Wesen des Christenthums*. Pp.75-77.

¹² Marx, Karl & Engels. F. (1969). *Collected Works*. Vol-III. p.182.

¹³ Engels F. (1959). *Anti Diihring*. p.435.

sacrifices and other rites. This religious worship brought into being priests, sorcerers, pastors and other religious servants and also various religious organization and institution. Thus, Marx believed that ‘the appearance of classes and exploitation subjected man to the pressure of spontaneous social forces. The helplessness of the exploited in the struggle against the exploiters gave rise to a belief in a better life in the world to come as inevitably as the impotence of the savage on fighting nature engendered belief in gods, devils and miracles. The working people sought in religion deliverance from the suffering and privation inflicted on them by exploiting society.’¹⁴ Therefore, Marx’s the foundation of irreligious criticism against religion is that man makes religion; religion does not make a man. Therefore, Marx writes- ‘religion is the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless condition. It is the opium of the people’.¹⁵ This dictum of Marx’s was the cornerstone of the Marxist outlook of religion, where reflected his idea that the abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people and demand for their real happiness. Thus, Marx believed that ‘being an element of the superstructure, religion in an antagonistic class society seeks to reinforce the economic basis and strengthen the exploiting system. It has been preaching submission to the exploiters and to fate and non-resistance to evil and violence, thereby paralyzing there volutionary energy of the masses and dooming them passivity and meek waiting for god’s world be done. Hence, Marx’s thoughts on

¹⁴ Hanna, George.(Ed.).1968).*Marxist Philosophies*. p.341.

¹⁵ Marx Karl.(1844).*Introduction to a Contribution to the Critique of Hegal’s Philosophy of Rights*.Pp.1-9.

religions continue to serve the exploiting that is being driven from the historical scene.’¹⁶

As a whole, Karl Marx’s attitude towards religion was negative and he said that religion is an ideological instrument for the protection of private property. As a critic on religion, Marx said that ‘the criticism of religion ends with the teaching that men’s is the highest being for men, hence with the categorical imperative men is debased, enslaved, forsaken and despicable’.¹⁷

6.1.4: Human Rights:

Śaṅkaradeva, as a firm believer of human rights, raised his voice against the social evil and sent a message to the masses for the faith in fraternity, equality, liberty and social justice through *bhakti* or devotion. In his thoughts, he believed that listening to the name of God and its glorious chanting in the company of devotees pave the way for equality in society. He said-

*śatru mitra sava kariyo sama/
ehise kṛṣṇara bhakti uttama //*¹⁸

It means- to behave in the same way with enemy and a friend is the greatest way of worshipping *Kṛṣṇa*.

But, Karl Marx’s thought on ‘human rights are mainly based on the class system’¹⁹. Marx believed that the full realization of individuals’ self was possible only

¹⁶ Hanna, George.(Ed.).(1968).*Marxist Philosophies*..p.341.

¹⁷ Marx, Karl & Engels. F. (1969).*Collected Works*, Vol-III. p.182.

¹⁸ *Kīrtana-ghoṣā,Prahlādacarita*. v.392.

¹⁹ Gauba, O.P. (2013).*An Introduction to Political Theory*.p.369.

within the context of a society. His concept of human rights emphasizes social rights rather than on an individual's rights. This was a link with the economic system of society. Marx asserted that rights cannot be understood in isolation from the pattern of social classes and the struggles going on between haves and haven't as necessary consequences of the laws of dialectical materialism. Therefore, Marx vehemently criticized the bourgeoisie concept of human rights, because in this system human rights were concentrated only in the capitalist society, where they have the ownership of the means of production and result was in the alienation of the working class. Hence, Marx emphasized that the exploited class cannot have the right until the capitalist system was replaced by socialism through proletarian revolution or dictatorship of the proletariat.

However, regarding human rights, Marx along with Engels observed that the so-called rights of man had nothing to offer to man as such. These rights have been designed to serve the interest of a particular class, the bourgeoisie, the capitalist class, the owner of the means of social production, where these rights are secured by law, but the law is nothing but a superstructure based on the foundation of the material condition of life. Therefore, Marx's thoughts on human right sought to secure the freedom of man from injustice and exploitation. Thus, Marx wants to replace 'the capitalist system by a socialist system through the proletarian revolution, which ultimately brings a classless society.'²⁰

²⁰ Gauba, O.P.*op.cit.* p.371.

6.1.5: Attitude towards Gender Equality:

The gender equality means fairness in treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs, which include equal treatment which might be different but considered equivalent in terms of right, obligation and opportunities. In ‘primitive conditions, man had no knowledge of the techniques to control the turbulent forces of nature and to satisfy these forces they took to some illusory techniques, which was anthropologically known as magic i.e. ceremonial dances by primitive agriculture. This act they believed that it would help the plants grow tall and yield a rich harvest’²¹. Again, in the primitive society, the fertility of women was compared to that of the earth. They, therefore, regarded the earth as the mother. Therefore, in the Hindu tradition the earth has always been regarded as mother and so was addressed as *Vasumatī* or the mother earth. This thought is witnessed in the *Manusamhitā* in the following lines-

kṣetrabhūtā smṛtā nārī/

*bījabhūtaḥ smṛtaḥ pumān/*²²

It means- Man is like the seed and the earth is like the field. *Manusamhitā* mentioned it in the following line also –

*iyam bhūmirhi bhūtānām śvāśvatī yonirucyate*²³

It means- this earth (the agricultural field) is the eternal vagina of the creatures.

²¹ Barman, Sivanath. (2013). *Tradition to Modernity-Essay on Assam*. p.4

²² *Manusamhitā*. verse.9/33

²³ *Ibid*. verse.9/37.

In ancient Assam, the religious cults like ‘*Tāntricism* and *Śaktism* not only worshipped as cults but they were also a symbol of women encouragement. Therefore, during that time these cults were considered as the magico–religious reflex of society, which was matriarchal in nature and elevated the procreative power of women to a spiritual level’.²⁴ Similarly in the cults of *Śaktism* in ancient Assam, the aboriginal tribes followed a matriarchal tradition and female deities dominated their belief system. Aryanized deities were given the name *Śakti Devī* and women were considered to possess the creative energy or *Śakti*. These examples of women worshipped in ancient Assam through different cults proved that before the advent of Śaṅkaradeva women were conferred the highest position in society.

However, the philosophical thoughts of Śaṅkaradeva on gender equality are found in one of his important literary works entitled *Anāḍipātana*. Here, he describes in detail the theory of evolution which is borrowed by Śaṅkaradeva from the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy. According to *Sāṃkhya* *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* are two independent realities. While *Puruṣa* is inactive and *Prakṛti* is active but blind. In Śaṅkaradeva’s philosophy however, *Puruṣa* or the God produced *Prakṛti* from himself and *Prakṛti* was not an independent entity. He has described *Prakṛti* as the energy or free will of God. It means *Prakṛti* has no separate existence and at the time of dissolution *Prakṛti* gets merged in God.

Śaṅkaradeva also fought for the equal right of women through his literary works *Rāmāyaṇa Uttarākāṇḍa*. Here, he mentions that when there had been injustice

²⁴ Barman, Sivanath.(2013).*Tradition to Modernity-Essay on Assam*.p.5.

with *Śītā*, she protested against the Lord *Rāma* accusing him of violating justice. Similarly, in some of his other literary works like- *Hariścandra-Upākhyāna*, *Rukmiṇīharaṇa-Nāṭa* (play), *Rukmiṇī haraṇa -Kāvya*, *Pārijāta haraṇa-Nāṭa* (play), *Patnī pasāda* and *Keligopāla-Nāṭa* (play) he has eulogized women and has mentioned the independent identity of them.

On the other hand, Marxian argument on gender equality was dialectical. Marx and his dialectical perspective on gender equality have been found in one of his most important works *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts-1844*, where he argued that ‘women’s position in society could be used as a measure of the development of society as a whole. He believed that human beings would have to become able to see each other as valuable in themselves rather than as only what one individual can provide to another. Therefore, women would be especially significant in this regard. Thus, men and women would have to reach a point of development, where an individual is valued for who they are rather than any abstract category of men and women.’²⁵ Along with - *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts-1844*, the *Capital-Volume-I*, 1867, Marx contains some of his important work concerning women rights. For example, Karl Marx illustrated an appreciation of working women demands during and after the Paris Commune. It was especially in 1880, the preamble was written by Karl Marx and stated that ‘the emancipation of the productive classes is that of all women beings without distinction of sex or race.’²⁶ Like Marx’s thoughts on gender equality, his friend Friedrich Engels in his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*

²⁵ Brown.A. Heather (2014).*Marx on Gender and Family: A Summary*. p.23.

²⁶ Fernbach, David. (2010). *Marx Political Writings*.p.376.

(1884) observed that women should be treated with a high degree of consideration and respect. Engels in his own words said that the man seized the reins in the house and, the women were degraded, enthralled, considered the slave of the man's lust, a mere instrument of breeding children. The first effect of the sole of the men and how it was established is shown in the Patriarchal family. In favours of F. Engels, Marx wrote in the *Capital* that 'large-scale industry by assigning as it does an important part in the socially organized process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons and to children both sides, creates a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes.'²⁷

However, Marx believed that by abolishing private property and exploitation, socialism puts an end to every oppression and inequality including the unequal position of the women. Under socialism, women get freed from the clutches of private property elements and would be given the opportunity for establishing the family and marriage based on love, friendship and cooperation of the husband and wife, etc. Again, Marx believed that in socialism a new form of family, new conditions in the status of women and the upbringing of the younger generation were organized contrary to the highest form of modern capitalism, where female and child labour led to the breakup of the patriarchal family and inevitably assumed the most terrible, disastrous and repulsive forms in modern society.

²⁷ Marx, Karl. (1867). *Capital Vol-I*. Chapter.13. Pp.489-90.

6.1.6: Attitude towards the major determining factors of Social Development:

In Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy, devotion or *bhakti* is of the highest value of human life and determining factor of social development. *Bhakti* was considered the highest goal and ultimate source of human bliss and spiritual enjoyment. Śaṅkaradeva believed that *bhakti* appeals to the heart and can be easily practiced by common people. By admitting the superiority of *bhakti*, Śaṅkaradeva asserted the dignity of man. Through *bhakti*, Śaṅkaradeva believed that the highest good can be achieved by self – surrender at the feet of the Lord. To serve the Lord with devotion, leads to human goodness, progress, and perfection. Therefore, his chief disciple Mādhavdeva writes-

kiriṣi kara ālo manāi
hari carṇa sevā parama sukhe/
yatana kariyā harira nāma
*sadāya bhāviyo sukhe/*²⁸

It means—Oh my friends do cultivate and till the field of *bhakti* so as to have the goodwill of God. Chanting God's name will make you happy.

Śaṅkaradeva again asserted that 'for every devotee there only needs selfless devotion to the Lord and love for all creatures. Those devotees who respect human beings and treated them as forms of God and love all creatures of nature they become free from all sorts of evils, such as jealousy, enmity, pride and reproach. In the Śaṅkaradeva thinking of *bhakti* is not only a determining factor of societal good but also conceived as be all and end all of life.'²⁹

²⁸ Mādhavdeva, *Borgīt*.No.19.

²⁹ Sharma, N. S.(1966).*The Neo- Vaiṣṇavite Movement and The Satra Institution of Assam*. p.49

On the other hand, Marx's viewpoint on social development is that people cannot exist without food, clothes, shelter and other necessity of life. He believed that nature, however, does not provide these things ready-made, to produce them, people must work. Labour is, therefore, the basis of social life, a natural necessity for a man. Without labour and productive activity, human life itself would be impossible. Therefore Marx's thoughts on social development believed that the production of material wealth was consequently the chief determining factor. Again, Marx asserted that the productive forces were the means of production and instruments of labour, which was created by society and people, produced the material wealth. The productive forces determine the relations of man to nature and his power over it. Therefore, Marx believed that the working people are the principal element of the productive forces and the productive forces were not only the factors in material production. People can produce only jointly by organizing in society because labour has been social in character. Hence Marx writes that 'in order to produce, they (people) enter into definite connections and relations with one another and only within these social connections and relations does their action on nature, does production take place.'³⁰

6.1.7: Way to achieve Classless Society and paths of Emancipation and Liberation:

The inculcation of emancipation and liberation are the main goals of Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx. These are the major pillars of a classless society. Both these thinkers have their own means to acquire the state of emancipation and

³⁰ Marx. Karl. & F, Engels. (1969). *Selected Works*. Vol-I. p.89.

liberation. These means opted by these two philosophers are mentioned in the following table-

Table 6.5
Path of Emancipation and Liberation

Sl	Philosophy of	Path of Emancipation	Path of Liberation	Critical Reflection
1	Śaṅkaradeva	Religious non-violence/Altruistic non-violence	Reformative and Transformative movement	Simplicity of religion
2	Karl Marx	Revolutionary violence, Class Struggle	Radical movement	Extremism and violation means failure to build for Classless and Stateless Society.

From this table, it is clear that the philosophy of these two leaders regarding the path of emancipation and liberation is different, but both wanted a classless society. As a social reformer and propounder of Neo-vaiṣṇavite movement, Śaṅkaradeva had a clear vision of the future society, where all men would be equal and there would be no repression of men by men. Śaṅkaradeva believed that classless and casteless society can be achieved only by pure devotion in the form of humanitarian services and by the simplicity of religion. Therefore, in his religion *Eka Śaraṇa Hari Nāma Dharma* simply by chanting the name of *Hari* or Lord *Kṛṣṇa* anyone can, as if by magic, deem himself of all the trials and tribulations of life of all

earthly sins and can be bestowed with a happy life'³¹. Hence, Śaṅkaradeva in his philosophy compared the material world sometimes with a snake full of venom, to a prison house, dark and dingy, to a dense forest full of wild animals or to a stormy sea, where he advised people to come out of it by simply uttering the name of *Hari* or *Rāma* or *Kṛṣṇa*. He said that chanting the name of *Hari* was the only way to deliverance from the shackles of *Karma* and the attainment to *Mokṣa* (liberation).

On the other hand, regarding the path of emancipation and liberation, Karl Marx believed that the class was the manifestation of economic differentiation. Therefore; Marx said 'a class is a group of people who stand in a common relationship to the means of production'³². It means, a class by Marx was basically, economic in nature and it has great social importance, where the class was not determined by the occupations or income but by the position in the process of production. Again, Marx defined those who owned and controlled the means of production viz. slave owners, feudal landlords or the capital were the dominant class and those who worked for them like slaves, peasants and industrial labourers were the sub-ordinate class. The relationship between these two classes is not only of dominance and subordination but also of exploitation. Therefore, Marx asserted that the essences of exploitation are the main source of conflict between the classes that have occurred throughout history. Thus, Marx's believed that with 'the growth of class consciousness among the working class and their class solidarity becomes crystallized. As a result, this class solidarity of the workers was able to form a union against the bourgeoisie, where the

³¹ Barman, Sivanath. (2013). *Tradition to Modernity-Essay on Assam*. p.41.

³² Rawat, K.H. (2010). *Sociology-Basic Principle*. p.186.

class struggle reached its height a violent revolution breaks out it and destroys the structure of capitalist society and the capitalist would grow fewer and stronger, as a result, their endless competition and workers would spark a successful revolution'³³.

However, Marx in his thoughts of emancipation and liberation remarked that unlike other wars and revolutions the class revolution is to be a historic one. Marx felt that the revolution to be a bloody one would terminate the capitalist society and lead to the social dictatorship of the proletariat, where proletariats establish their social dictatorship and a classless and stateless society. Marx predicted that in this society nobody owns anything but everybody owns everything.

In this chapter, after the comparative analysis of social reconstruction thoughts of Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx, it is found that both the thinkers were very much concerned with the process of social reconstruction and social reorganization for common masses. Śaṅkaradeva, in his social reconstruction philosophy, has not fought for politico-economic emancipations of the general people. His fight was against religious superstitions, which have prevented the common people from enjoying a free, equal and democratic life. On the other hand, Karl Marx wanted a self-regulated society, which should be ruled by the principles, according to ability and needs of the people. As Marx holds that human behaviour is determined by economic condition, similarly Śaṅkaradeva also holds that the same is determined by religious conditions.

It is true that the ways of the changes in the social composition of these two social thinkers were different, but both wanted to establish an egalitarian society for

³³ Rao, C.N. Sankara. (2000). *Sociology: Primary Principles of Sociology with an Introduction to Social Thought*. p. 687.

the greater interest of the common masses. Śaṅkaradeva's social reconstruction thoughts believed in a self-regulated society comprised of self-discipline and individuals having minimum needs with the sense of moral responsibility towards social needs. As against Śaṅkaradeva's thoughts, Karl Marx wanted to overthrow capitalism and vouched for social ownership of means of production, universal labour, the fullest development of technology, the full development of the forces of production in a classless society and the state will itself wither away. Nevertheless, both of them tried to investigate the real nature of society and value of human being, and were very much concerned with the social problems during their times and tried to reform and reconstruct their societies