Abstract
The moral progress of human beings mostly depends on how much we have been able to connect our daily conducts in social and practical life with our humanistic outlook. In the capitalist society relation among human beings is not always human. In such society a man cannot spontaneously build up human relation with other man. The bourgeoisie class in the capitalist system sometimes gives promises to establish the humanistic ideal, but their promises are never materialized due to the influence of the very system of capitalism. But humanism in Marxian socialist system is different from that in the capitalist system. With a view to establish a realistic communism it brings a radical change in the relations among human beings in society. Socialistic humanism of Marx is a universal principle which may easily be applicable to all human beings. It has a process of development.

Keywords: Human civilization, society, capitalism, humanism, class antagonisms, exploitation, morality, class-divisionless society, communism

1. Introduction
The progress of human civilization is related, in various ways to the different theories of humanism, different ideals of humanism and different types of humanistic conducts. Humanism is a philosophical point of view to establish man’s greatness in the world. It makes man as the measure of all things. All opinions and conclusions in regard to the explanation of man’s life and his world may be revised and corrected by rational analysis. In a word, it is man and only man who is the maker of his own fate. Humanism is after all a socio-moral concept. The moral progress of human beings mostly depends on how much we have been able to connect our daily conducts in social and practical life with our humanistic outlook.

In the history of human civilization it has been seen that morality-based humanism cannot take breath in a capitalist system. In the capitalist society relation among human beings is not always human. In such society a man cannot spontaneously build up human relation with other man. To Marx, the enmity between the two classes—the capitalist class and the labour class is a natural phenomenon in a capitalist system. To maintain the existence of this system for their self-interest the capitalists or their followers try to oppress and exploit the other class, as and when possible. The bourgeoisie class in the capitalist system sometimes gives promises to establish the humanistic ideal, but their promises are never materialised due to the influence of the very system of capitalism. In the observation of Dr.Bidhuranjan Nath, a contemporary Marxist humanist thinker of Bengal, “The humanistic trend of morality reaches a state of acute crisis in a capitalist society because it is a society where relations among people become particularly inhuman and are based on class antagonisms and the oppression
of man by man. The historical findings of bourgeois relations show that while declaring humanistic ideals, the bourgeoisie has not gone beyond mere philanthropy. In the capitalist society, humanism has degenerated into an appeal to help the poor and needy. The humanism of petty bourgeoisie is exhibited in offering crumbs to the man it has robbed. But philanthropy is not, in itself, bad—it has its own value. But it is bad when it is used in a bad way. The bourgeoisie does not aim at a goal of substantially changing the situation of the unprivileged, they seek to alleviate suffering; they make philanthropy a means to confuse people morally and ideologically with a view to distracting them from the class struggle. What is more, they reduce it into a kind of business. In the capitalist world, the bourgeoisie exploiters, amidst the drumbeat of charitable projects gave back to the ‘plundered victims the hundredth part of what belong to them’. In the system millions of people are appropriated.

But socialism signifies a sharp break, a radical change in the relations among people. It breaks up with all class antagonisms and open up a truly new, human epoch. By abolishing private ownership of the means of production, by demolishing all means of exploitation of man by man and natural alienation of the people of society it introduces a new measure of humaneness into social relations” (Nath, 2001).

2. Humanism in Marxian Socialist System

Humanism in Marxian socialist system is different from that in the capitalist system. With a view to establish a realistic communism it brings a radical change in the relations among human beings in society. Capitalism is based on the ownership of private property. Socialism or socialistic humanism aims at the abolition of ownership of private property including private ownership of the means of production. It tries to demolish the various means of exploitation of man by man. It tries to remove the existing mutual alienation of human beings in a society. Actually it only aims is establish a new dimension of humanness into social relations. In this connection we may remember some words of Karl Marx from his Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844. In the section Private Property and Communism in the Third Manuscript Marx says that communism (as a higher form of socialism) is the positive transcendence of private property and it is the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man. To quote his words, “Communism as the positive transcendence of private property as human self-estrangement, and therefore as the real appropriation of human essence by and for man; communism therefore as the complete return of man to himself as a social (i.e., human) being—a return accomplished consciously and embracing the entire wealth of previous development. This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and Man—the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution.” (Marx, 1993).

In fact, socialistic humanism is not limited to any particular school of thinkers. It has been accepted as an ideal by many religious thinkers, idealists, spiritualists, materialists, scientists, writers, artists and so on who have contributions in some way or other in building up the human civilization. But generally their humanistic calls are not always from the level of concrete reality. Sometimes their humanistic call appears to be empty sound. Real humanism, according to the Marxist humanists, has only close relation with socialism or communism proposed by Karl Marx. Humanism appears to be meaningless if it is not related with the concrete reality and practical life of human beings, if it does not influence the development of human society and for this purpose if it does not strongly establish the man-to-man relation in
human society. Morality in the Marxian socialist system emphasises upon the human relation among the human beings. These relations are based on brotherly feelings, co-operations and friendliness among the people. It also expects sincere and honest performance of the duties which are not only for self-interest, but socially valuable. By proposing honest performance of socially valuable duties socialism aims at the higher position of humanism.

Karl Marx was a versatile philosopher. He had a philosophy of history, a philosophy of society, a philosophy of economics and a philosophy of politics. His humanistic philosophy is a faithful combination of all these philosophies. As there are different interpretations of the Marxist philosophy of history, that of society, that of economics and that of politics, there are also different interpretation of the Marxist philosophy of humanism. Some of such interpreters are György Lukács (1885-1971) of Hungary, Ernst Simon Bloch (1885-1977) of Germany, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) of Italy, Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979) of the USA (born in Germany) and Erich Fromm (1900-1980) of Germany. These Marxist humanists have brought the humanistic philosophy of Karl Marx to light as it is contained in his early and latter writings. The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 contains the ideas of earlier Marx. It was published in 1932 after fifty years of death of Karl Marx. After this publication some Marxian thinkers discovered the deviation of Marx’s thought in his latter writings which was dogmatically accepted by the then political leaders from his earlier ideas particularly contained in EPM (Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844). Some of them, again, refused to accept such deviation. The above-mentioned Marxist humanists were not satisfied with the Soviet interpretation of Marxism. The thought of each of them demands long discussion. Just mentioning the key-points within a few words the lines of humanistic thought of Lukács, Bloch, Gramsci and Marcuse, I would like to present the view of Fromm, the latest thinker in this regard in some details.

The Marxian humanist György Lukács laid emphasis on the Marxist claim of the possibility of a dialectical unity of subject and object. According to him, this was to be obtained through the proletariat’s realisation of itself and the concomitant destruction of economic alienation in society. Lukács’s most important philosophical work is History and Class Consciousness (1923). In it he emphasised the influence of Hegelian dialectics on Marx (At that time the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 was not discovered). Lukač’s was criticised in later years for his overestimation of Hegelian Marxism and underestimation of Engels-inspired Soviet version of the dialectic of nature. Lukas saw in Marxism the way to overcome the duality of subject and object inherent in western thought. Influenced by Hegelian dialectic he thought that the experience of the working class can become both the subject and the object of history, thereby achieving the necessary harmony and totality. All truth is to be seen in relation to the proletariat’s historical mission. Lukač’s was convinced that Marxian humanism can be established only by the strong union between the proletariat’s consciousness (subject) and the practical works led by the communist party (object).

Ernst Simon Bloch, though believed in Marxism, was influenced by the German Idealism, Neo-Platonism and utopianism. In his well-known book The Principle of Hope (written during 1954-1959; First published, 1959), he upheld that human beings are essentially unfinished, moved by a cosmic impulse-‘hope’- a tendency in them to strive for the as-yet-unrealized, which manifests itself as utopia or vision of future possibilities. He was distinguished for his doctrine of hope or utopianism. In his thought on Marxian humanism, he attempted to incorporate religious striving into a fundamentally materialist world-view in the line of thought of Karl Marx.

Antonio Gramsci’s major work Prison Notebooks (written during 1929-1935; First published, 1957) tried to establish Marxism as humanism. It stressed the need for a transformed self-
consciousness or battle of ideas in society before the occurrence of revolution. Thus in his humanistic Marxism he dismissed the historical fatalism and orthodox Marxism adopted by the Soviet Marxists. To establish the true Marxian philosophy of humanism Gramsci tried to reconstruct Marxism as a political philosophy and a philosophy of praxis. At the same time he wanted to move away from the historical materialist conception of Marxism as a scientific theory of economy and society. Rather, he attempted to incorporate into Marxist thought, in radically altered form, the brand of Hegelianism and historicism. To him, all philosophy is historically concrete, belonging to a people, a time and a place. Going to reconstruct the Marxian socialistic humanism he attempted to refute the traditional Marxist idea that economy is the basic infrastructure which determines society’s political and cultural superstructure. The concept of “hegemony” is central to Gramsci’s thought. It refers either to the consensual basis of an existing political system, achieved when a ruling class imposes its world-view as common sense; or it may refer to the attainment of a new common sense by a dominated class. For Gramsci, ideological struggles in the society are struggles for hegemony, struggle for the hearts and minds of people. Gramsci’s theory of hegemony refers to a relationship between two political units where one dominates the other with the consent of other.

Herbert Marcuse, another Marxist humanist reinterpreted the thoughts of Karl Marx along with those of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), particularly in his famous book *Eros and Civilization* (1955). According to him, human existence is grounded in *Eros*, but these impulses depend upon and are shaped by labour. He proposed the utopian possibility of happiness and freedom in the unity of *Eros* and labour. Synthesising the ideas of Freud and Marx he dreamt of a non-repressive human society in all respects. Marcuse was recognized as the father of the New Left, when his book ‘One-Dimensional Man’ was published in 1964. In it he appeared as a critic of Soviet socialism. The book became a Bible of the radical student movements of 1960s in some western countries. Like Gramsci, Marcuse also believed that the workers in modern society were stupefied by the products of their own labour Revolution therefore must come from those outside the system, such as students, intellectuals and minorities.

3. Re-evaluation by Erich Fromm

Erich Fromm was a distinguish psycho-analyst. Like Gramsci and Marcuse he was a critic of Soviet Marxism. In his interpretation of Marxist humanism he challenged the both Soviet distortion and western ignorance of Marx’s early thought. According to him, in both early Marx and latter Marx man possesses the central position. Man is not only a man of physical or economical need. Man has an individuality of his own. So Marxist humanism should not only be understood in terms of the so-called materialism. According to him, we must take into account a spiritual thirst for human unity already implied in Marxian humanistic philosophy.

In this dissertation I would like to give special attention to the thought of Fromm as expressed in his *Marx’s Concept of Man*. In the very first chapter entitled *The Falsification of Marx’s Concepts* Fromm has logically placed different false interpretation of Marxism to establish his own theory of Marxist humanism.

Fromm thinks that Marxian philosophy has so far been misunderstood from four points of view. First, Marx is no doubt a materialist philosopher but to some interpreters of Marxism, as if Marx preached crude materialism, according to which, only material gain and self-interest are the aim of human life. According to Fromm, if Marx had this aim in his vision of
socialism, then it “fits almost exactly the of present day capitalist society”. Secondly, Marx no doubt thought about the welfare of the masses, and so he had to emphasise on collectivism. In view of this some interpreters discover that in Marxian philosophy the importance of the individual was neglected. Thirdly, these two points of view jointly give rise to another point of view by which Marx has also been misunderstood as a complete materialist neglecting the importance of the spiritual aspect of the individual. As if besides material needs man could have no spiritual needs. Man is nothing but a material body. As if according to Marx, man is in the words of Fromm ‘soulless person’. Some interpreters opine that as Marx criticized religion or belief in some supernatural power, he denied spiritual value. But spiritualism cannot be same as belief in religion or God. In the chapter, “Marx’s Concept of Socialism” Fromm points out, “Marx fought against religion exactly because it is alienated, and does not satisfy the true needs of man. Marx’s fight against God is, in reality, a fight against the idol that is called God..... Marx’s atheism is the most advanced form of rational mysticism, closer to Meister Eckhart or to Zen Buddhism than are most of those fighters for God and religion who accuse him of ‘Godlessness’.” (Fromm, 2005). According to Fromm, we can not ignore the fact that like Hegel and many others Marx expresses his concern for man’s soul not in theistic but in philosophical language. In fact, man is not only a physico-psychological organism. To him there is something which is beyond it. This something is the spiritual entity which needs some satisfaction like the satisfaction of man’s physical and psychological needs. According to Fromm, Marx did never ignore this spiritual needs, and thirst of man.

Lastly, from some another influential point of view also Marx has been misunderstood. It is generally thought that Marx’s socialism is a paradise of millions of people who submit to an all powerful state beourocracy. Though the people might have achieved equality, they have to surrender their freedom. They are materially satisfied ‘individuals’, without the realisation of their own individuality.

In Fromm’s considered opinion Marxian socialistic humanism has been misunderstood by different interpreters. So it has not so long been justified as real humanism. He writes, “Suffice is to say at the outset that this popular picture of Marx’s ‘materialism’ – his anti-spiritual tendency, his wish for uniformity and subordination – is utterly false. Marx’s aim was that of the spiritual emancipation of man, of his liberation from the chains of economic determination, of restituting him in his human wholeness, of enabling him to find unity and harmony with his fellow man and with nature. Marx’s philosophy was, in secular and nontheistic language, a new and radical step forward in the tradition of prophetic Messianism; it was aimed at the full realization of individualism, the very aim which has guided western thinking from the Renaissance and the Reformation far into the nineteenth century.” (Ibid).

In this connection it may be noted that, according to Fromm, the ideas about the nature and destiny of man of the young Marx contained in the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and that of the older Marx as expressed in A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy and, in particular, in Capital did not undergo a basic change. Marx did not renounce his earlier views in regard to the nature and essence of man.

In the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 Marx gave much emphasis on full and free development of human beings. So there he was much concerned with the concept of alienation in class-divided society and strongly proposed for the abolition of private property. Marx neither denied the social nature of man, nor ignored the ideal of collectivism for the sake of individualism. In fact he never underestimated full and free development socialised individual human being. In the third volume of Capital (1893) he writes, “The actual wealth of society, and the possibility of constantly expanding its reproduction process, therefore, do
not depend upon the duration of surplus-labour, but upon its productivity and the more or less copious conditions of production under which it is performed. In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must civilized man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working-day is its basic prerequisite” (Marx, 1971).

According to Fromm, the Russian communists in their thinking and their socio-political system have neglected the matter of development of individual and gave importance only to the economic determinism in human society. Fromm writes, “In their system, man is the servant of the state and of production, rather than being the supreme aim of all social arrangements. Marx’s aim, the development of the individuality of the human personality, is negated in the Soviet system to an even greater extent than in contemporary capitalism. The materialism of the communists is much closer to the mechanistic materialism of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie that Marx fought against, than to Marx’s historical materialism.” (Erich Fromm, 2005). Fromm objects that ignoring the matter of human development and individual freedom the Russian communists were unable to established the true Marxist socialism, which is, in other words, Marxist humanism.

What is, then, the true Marxian humanism according to Fromm? In the chapter ‘Marx’s Concept of Socialism’ in his “Marx’s Concept of Man”, Fromm has tried to present the true Marxian humanism. In the beginning of the chapter Fromm declares: “Quite clearly the aim of socialism is man. It is to create a form of production and an organization of society in which man can overcome alienation from his product, from his work, from his fellow man, from himself and from nature; in which he can return to himself and grasp the world with his own powers, thus becoming one with the world. Socialism for Marx was, as Paul Tillich put it, ‘a resistance movement against the destruction of love in social reality’.” (Ibid)

Many thinkers before Karl Marx thought about socialism but it was Karl Marx who for the first time made clear the essential elements of socialism. According to Marx, the system of production is the main driving force in human society. In the socialistic system of society this production is expected to be brought about collectively, not by any competitive way rather in an unalienated way. In such system of society man’s production is to be controlled by reason. The entire process of production would remain under the control of man himself, there would remain no place for unseen power. This clearly distinguishes Marx’s concept of socialism from the idealists’ concepts before him. Marx strongly expected that socialism would give rise to a new form of unalienated society, where to quote the words of Fromm, “…..man would become independent, stand on his own feet, and would no longer be crippled by the alienated mode of production and consumption; that he would truly be the master and the creator of his life, and hence that he could begin to make living his main business, rather than producing the means for living.” (Ibid)
Fromm thinks that according to Marx, in course of the history of human civilization man has created a culture by which he always wants to be free from the chains not only of economic poverty but of spiritual poverty created by alienation. Marx’s entire dream of socialism was based on his strong faith in man and in the potentialities inherent in the essence of man. To him, the development of human society was so far made possible by the essential potentialities of man. So his socialism or communism is conditioned by human freedom and activity. According to him, only a socialist society can materialize the development of man’s real essence, where alienation has no place. This necessarily points to the necessary human relations in society by creating the living conditions for the truly free, rational, truly active and independent man.

Man is different from animal in his creativity and humanness. His real needs are actually rooted in his human nature. So following Marx, Fromm writes, “Man’s true needs are those whose fulfillment is necessary for the realization of his essence as a human being” (Ibid). He quotes the words of Marx, “The existence of what I truly love is felt by me as a necessity, as a need, without which my essence cannot be fulfilled, satisfied, complete” (Ibid).

According to Fromm, the socialism of Marx is an all-pervading protest against man-to-man alienation. Its strong revolt is against the lovelessness in human society which is originated by man’s exploitation by man. Also it is a protest against the exploitation of nature—the wasting of natural resources ignoring the majority of people. In Marx’s dream the real goal of socialism is the unalienated man, who can neither exploit other man nor dominate nature.

In the opinion of Fromm the socialist humanism of Marx is an attempt to re-establish a ‘good society’. Man is not only an animal, so he is not satisfied only with the fulfillment of his material needs. He has some spiritual needs by the fulfillment of which he highlights human values in society. For this purpose he cannot accept any type of authoritarianism – either the authoritarianism of Church, or that of the state. So he fought against the authoritarianism of Church and aimed at the eventual disappearance of the state. He proposed for such a good society which would be composed of voluntarily co-operating individual human beings. By reconstructing such a society he expected man’s place in the world as man, which may be called man’s true return to himself.

According to Fromm, the socialism of Marx carries the light of renaissance utopianism and the humanism of eighteenth century enlightenment. This position has been justifiably elaborated by Dr. Bidhuranjan Nath. Dr. Nath writes, “Marx’s humanism has strong and deep roots in the culture created by ‘Renaissance’, ‘Reformation’, ‘Reason’, and ‘Revolution’, at the time of which humanism grew into a distinct ideological movement – a system of views based on the respect for the dignity and rights of man, his value as a personality, concern for his welfare, his all-round development and the creation of favourable conditions for social life. Some of the most prominent humanists of the Renaissance such as Petrarch, Dante, Leonardo da Vinci, Copernicus, Shakespeare, Francis Bacon and others helped to mould mundane views. Humanism reached its zenith in the works of the 18th century Enlighteners who put forward the slogans of ‘equality’, ‘liberty’ and ‘fraternity’ and proclaimed men’s right freely to develop their ‘natural essence’. But the ideologists of humanism failed to grasp the actual vices of capitalism and its inhuman essence and were unable to discover effective ways and means for achieving a truly human society. The socialist humanism of Marx is fundamentally different from the previous ideologies or humanistic ideas as it postulated liberation of the poor and oppressed, especially the liberation of the working class from social injustice and dehumanization and the building of communism as an essential condition for the all-around and harmonious development of personality of all men in a just society. Marx was very critical of the official Christianity which gave a hypocritical defence of capitalist
exploitation. Here Marx may be compared with Martin Luther whose challenge to Roman Church brought about a counter-reformation in his enemy’s camp which led to the revaluation of ethical standards. Marx’s concern that began with Luther and gained strength with French Revolution helped to form the basis of most progressive ethical humanist agitation and reform since the revolutions of 1844. Marx’s attempt to elevate man to a dignified position with its ethical rigour, with its emphasis on needs has a tremendous influence upon the intelligentsia. The industrial revolution has clearly affected economic relations so completely that it calls for a world society with a world economy. Marx’s call for communism to the world challenges existing evils prevalent in the society, offers a clear and definite programme for action and professes to provide us with an ethical, moral reformation accompanied with a social message with which all idealists are in agreement.” (Nath, 2001).

In order to establish the Marxist socialism as humanism Fromm accepts it (Marxist socialism) as a new social order by which man can return to himself. It is that social order which overcomes the separateness and antagonism between subject and object. It ultimately aims at the humanization of nature. It wants to materialize a world in which man does not feel himself a stranger among strangers, but he feels himself as a living being in the vast world with which he has a non-different relationship.

From the above we may point out that the socialistic humanism of Marx is a universal principle which may easily be applicable to all human beings. It has a process of development. This development depends on the historical reality and experience of man and society. At the first stage of its development, the socialistic humanism of Marx came forward as the morality of the proletariat class. In it we find some moral standard such as class solidarity, unity of purpose, collective awareness etc. At the second stage it appeared as the morality of the whole of the people in a socialist society. And in the final stage it aimed at the general human morality in a communist society. Thus the so-called socialism may be seen to be a stepping stone, in the long historical journey, towards the complete triumph of communism, which is the ultimate form of the socialistic humanism of Marx.

4. Concluding Observations

So even with his strong belief in collectivism to change the world, not to interpret it, Marx, with his friend, Engels had to declare in the Manifesto of the Communist Party (1848) “When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

In place of the old bourgeois society with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all” (Marx & Engels, 1993).

This declaration in the Manifesto clearly reveals that Marx did never underestimate the individuality or individual freedom of man. But it was his strong belief that individual freedom, in true sense, cannot be ascertained in a class-divided social structure. Individual freedom, which is the primary condition for the establishment of humanistic social order, can
only be secured in a class-divisionless society, where, to repeat the words of Marx and Engels “…..free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.”

References

Ibid, p. 2.
Ibid, p.49.
Ibid, p. 50.