

## Liberty-Equality Relationships

Dr. Paromita Chakraborty, Surendranath College

The principle of liberty implies 'equal' freedom for everyone, if freedom for one becomes unfreedom for another it would be against the spirit of freedom itself. If the freedom for the strong destroys the freedom of the weak, freedom for the rich turns out to be a constraint for the poor, it would imply a negation of freedom, in this scenario liberty and equality are complementary principles. Harold Laski for example states that liberty and equality are complementary principles.

French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville on the other hand observed that in the principle of equality all social status is gradually eroded. The principle of equality encouraged individual subservience to public opinion, he also stated that that due to the extension of democracy in the social sphere public opinion leads to the tyranny of the majority. Hence there is conformity to generally held attitudes and standards which leads to a loss of liberty. The principle of liberty demands the encouragement of a variety of interests and opinions whereas the principle of equality tends to promote the conformity of opinions and attitudes. Tocqueville hence states that the demand for equality in the freedom of opinion should not lead to the suppression of freedom.

J.S. Mill also stated that if the opinion of a single individual was different from the rest of the society that society had no right to silence him. F.A. Hayek stated that every individual has differences in skills and abilities if one bounds to remove these inequalities it would result in an authoritarian rule destroying individual freedom.

Liberty and equality are the foundations of a just social order; demand for liberty implies the absence of special privileges for certain groups. The supporters of liberty contested the idea of absolute equality, they argue that liberty encourages man to acquire unlimited wealth, prestige and power while equality limits such opportunity it discourages initiative these thinkers state that equality blocks social progress.