

26/8/14.

Tomorrow: Aristotle

J. S. Mill

Introduction as a thinker.

- He is a liberal thinker
- He is a great champion of liberty in general & freedom of speech & expression in particular.
- He is also utilitarian thinker. However he has modified utilitarianism
- J.S. Mill is often called as an inconsistent thinker.
 - * We will find inconsistency in his thought related to liberty. That is why Barker calls him "Prophet of empty Liberty".
- He is an advocate of democracy but fearful of the tyranny of majority. that C. L. Wayer calls him a reluctant democrat.

Prominent works of J.S. Mill

- On utilitarianism
- On Liberty
- On representative govt.

On Utilitarianism :

- o In his quest to modify utilitarianism, J.S. Mill ultimately destroys the very foundation of utilitarianism.

What is Utilitarianism?

- Utilitarianism emerged in the works of Hobbes.

Later on developed by scholars like David Hume,

It became a systematic school of thought in the works of Bentham who is regarded as "Father of Utilitarianism".

- Class

Classical liberalism has 2 stages

- Natural Rights tradition

- Utilitarian tradition

Natural Rights tradition justifying minimum state for the sake of liberty.

Utilitarian Tradition justifying minimum state for the sake of utility. Utility became prime & Liberty became the secondary concern. Liberty became a means & utility/pleasure as an end in itself.

Utilitarianism became a dominant school of thought in public policy in 19th century.

Utilitarians are known as philosophical radicals rather than radical in true sense. Their philosophy gives appearance that they talk about pleasure of everyone but in practice it was a status quoist philosophy. Philosophy in the interest of capitalist class rather than in the interest of masses.

Key Principles of Utilitarianism

1. Utility

- Man is by nature utilitarian.
- All actions are guided by pleasure & pain.
- There is nothing wrong in being utilitarian because this is how nature has made us.

or ~~Bentham~~ "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of 2. sovereigns, i.e. pleasure & pain."

It is for them to guide us to what we should do & they alone determine what we shall do" — Bentham

Justification of human nature

what we should do what we shall do

2. Man is by nature individualistic.

because pleasure & pain are person experiences.

- All persons are same & there is no difference betⁿ a common man & Socrates

- Bentham is also a democrat & will not support any institutions like Philosopher King, etc.

3. Pleasure is purely a quantitative term.

Pleasures differ only in quantity, not in quality.

There can be more or less pleasure. But there is nothing like superior or inferior pleasure.

According to Bentham "Pushpin is as good as Poetry".

- He suggested that pleasure can be measured.

4. To calculate pleasure he gave Felicific Calculus.

Purpose of felicific calculus:

It is to be used by individuals in decision making

ethics =
pleasure
& pain

as well as by state in public policy.

- For Bentham pleasure is materialistic in origin.
- Pleasure is a matter of experience & not contemplation.

4. State is also an instrument of utility

State should pursue those policies which increase pleasure & decrease pain. In this context he suggested the principle of "Greatest happiness of greatest number".

5. Utilitarian view of Community / Society

- Community is nothing more than sum of individuals.
- The overall impact of this policy at that time was, it provided justification for Capitalists to maximize their profit even at the cost of exploitation of workers. Thus there was no regard for humanity & human dignity.
- It provided justification for non interference by state in economic sphere either to regulate wages or working conditions.

It is for this inhuman aspect of utilitarianism that it was criticised by humanitarians as well as socialists. Carlyle called utilitarianism as "Pig's Philosophy".

Mills revision of Utilitarianism

Reason for revision

- Mill considered himself as the disciple of Bentham & he wanted to defend his master.

How he revises it

He was influenced by utilitarianism but at the same time he was also influenced by Greek Thinkers.

He was influenced by Plato, Socrates.

He was also influenced by poet William Wordsworth.

Mill has examined basic assumptions of Bentham about human nature, pleasure, concept of community, etc.

◦ It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied. It is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than fool satisfied. And if fool & pig are of different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of question. The other party knows both the sides. — Mill

Bentham

Mill

- Pleasure is quantitative

- pleasure is quantitative + qualitative

- Pushpin is as good as poetry

- Poetry is superior than pushpin.

- Proposes Felicific Calculus

- Felicific Calculus is redundant

- All individuals are similar

- Individuals differ

- Pleasure is materialistic

- Pleasure can also be spiritualistic.

- Believes in direct experience of pleasure

- Pleasure can be by indirect experience sacrificing material goods.

- Man is only concerned with himself

- Society is also important for man

- Utilitarianism is a principle of public policy

- It is principle of ethics.

- Talks about pleasure

- Talks about happiness.

- Influenced by Hobbes

- Influenced by Bentham as well as Greek thinkers like Socrates & Plato

- modification of util
- diff. man vs animal , pleasure quality.
- felicific calculus redundant.

- The statement is in context of Mill's attempt to defend utilitarianism by ~~dividing~~ the principles of Bentham. However in the process, he destroys the key principles of utilitarianism. Mill has modified utilitarianism in following manner

- He agrees that man seeks pleasure but he differs from Bentham with respect to the concept of pleasure. For him pleasure is not simply quantitative but also qualitative. He renders Felicific Calculus useless. by establishing that pleasure is also qualitative.
- Mill makes a difference betⁿ pleasure & happiness. He makes happiness superior to pleasure. Man can gain happiness even by sacrificing material goods for the other members of community.
- He differs from Bentham's conception about human beings. Not only pleasures differ but human beings also differ from each other.
- For Mill, man is not simply egoistic but also moral & social. Later on Mill has established that Liberty is superior to Utility. $\square$

It is for above reasons it is said that 'Mill was a peter who denied his master.'

Mill on Liberty

Liberty is a central concern of liberalism. No philosopher before Mill has dealt with the concept of liberty in a comprehensive manner. Though Locke talks about the natural rights of life, liberty & property, he has given greater attention to right to property over liberty in his work.

It is for this reason, J.S. Mill is known as more liberal than anyone else.

Significance of his work

- Liberalism came under criticism because it gained & became utilitarian. Mill reestablished the glory of liberalism by establishing that liberty & not utility is the central concern.

o Mill as a prophet of empty liberty

Importance of Liberty

- Liberty is important not only for individual but also for society & state.

Utility of Liberty for Individual

- In the absence of liberty, man can not lead a life of his choice. It is necessary for the development of one's personality.

- Liberty is so central to development of human beings that even scholars like Amartya Sen viewed liberty & development as synonymous when he says that 'Development is Freedom'.

Importance of liberty for state & society.

◦ No state or society becomes great by dwarfing its own people.

Extent of

Scope of liberty of an individual.

According to Mill person should have maximum liberty.

He classifies human life & actions into 2 spheres.

- self regarding
- others regarding

Specific freedoms talked about by J.S. Mill.

- Freedom of Speech & Expression.
- Freedom to Act
- Freedom to form associations.

Importance of freedom of speech & expression

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(next wed. Machiavelli)

● Importance of freedom of speech & expression.

● - Out of all species only human beings have this ability to communicate with each other through their speech. Human beings express themselves through their speech & expression.

● - People should be given freedom of speech & expression as it will benefit not only that person but also society at large.

● - He goes to the extent of suggesting that even a person considered mad by the society should be given opportunity to express himself. He says that we don't know from where truth or relevant idea may emerge. There is no point in stopping a person from expressing himself. It will benefit society in 2 ways.

● - If there is any truth in his ideas, it will benefit society in correcting itself.

● - If his idea or views lack truth he will be in a position to understand it.

coercion

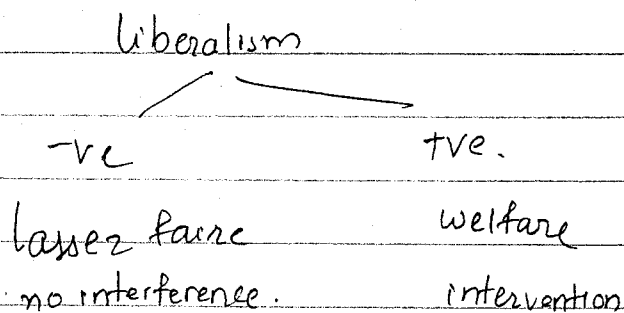
● - Mill was against the use of ~~coercion~~ in any form

● - Mill also suggest that if entire community except 1 person has 1 view, still it is important to listen to that person who differs from majority.

● - Without freedom of speech & expression it is not possible to establish democratic political system.

● - He also suggests that people should also be given freedom to act according to their views & freedom to form association. Freedom of speech & expression will bring plurality in the society as he does not believe in uniformity.

- o Mill as a prophet of empty liberty & scholar of abstract individualism — Barker



— Barker has criticised Mill's views on liberty as hollow on following grounds

- Mill's understanding of liberty:

Though Mill allows state to intervene in other's regarding actions of a person, Mill is not an exponent of +ve liberty. According to him, man has absolute freedom & doesn't give any scope for state intervention in self regarding actions. He accepts that there should be reasonable restrictions on those actions of a person which are other's regarding. In the sphere of other's regarding action, man can not claim absolute liberty.

- Barker a +ve liberal who believes in +ve liberty considers Mill's conception of liberty as wrong.

Mill is unable to defend his idea of -ve liberty. Mill goes for unscientific classification of human actions onto 2 types.

In reality there are very few actions which can be considered as self regarding. Thus he is creating a scope

for state's intervention in a big way. Actually for Barker the idea of -ve liberty is illogical & impractical.

Barker also calls him as a scholar of "Abstract Individualism". It implies that the individual & the type of liberty which Mill is talking about is not real but abstraction or based on his imagination. Real individual who is a member of society have very limited scope for absolute liberty.

Though Barker has established that Mill is a prophet of empty liberty but we can not underestimate the significance of J.S. Mill towards the theory of liberty. He is the first liberal scholar to deal with the issue of liberty in great detail. He is the greatest champion of freedom of speech & expression. No one can deny that -ve liberty has no relevance. Actually both the ideas have relevance which is more important will depend on the context. Mill may appear inconsistent in his thoughts. His understanding of liberty is -ve, but unlike Locke he is not able to justify complete non-interference. Mill is also a transitional thinker. He is standing on the crossroad of classical & modern liberalism.

India: procedural democracy
not substantive democracy.

Mill on Representative Govt / Democracy

- P

Mill is a supporter of Democracy because he is a champion of liberty. Mill believes that direct democracy is the best form of government. However in modern complex societies representative democracy is unavoidable.

Mill is not in favour of introducing democracy anywhere, anytime. He believes that society should be ready for democracy. Some essential prerequisites are a min. level of literacy, achievement of min. level of standard of living, civic sense, respect of dissent & a tolerant society.

For him, Democracy is not suitable for colonies.

According to him, India & China were once great societies but during his time these societies were in the state of degeneration. India in particular became a stagnant society. There was no respect for individuality, no scope for rational thoughts, society was under influence of religion/superstitions. He suggested benevolent despotism for colonies. He also makes a difference betⁿ true democracy & false democracy.

Rule of majority is not sufficient to be known as true democracy. True democracy implies respect for human dignity & human rights & liberties.

western : Capitalism.
proportional democracy.

Mill was concerned with the future of democracy. A

According to him we have achieved democracy after

long struggles. Hence introducing democracy in

societies which are not ready for it may be bad for

future of democracy & may provide legitimacy to

authoritarianism

- Mill was concerned with the tyranny of majority

crushing individual. Mill had suggested some safeguards

to protect democracy.

- Weighted voting

He suggests that all should be given 1 vote but

those who are educated & have property should be

given more than 1 vote.

- Plural Voting

When person has right to vote in more than one

constituency, according to him person should have

right to vote in all such constituencies where he has

property.

- Proportional Representation

- He supports giving right to vote to women

- He is supporter of upper house & did not favour

abolishing House of Lords.

For above reasons Mill is called as Reluctant Democrat.

He brings aristocratic element into democracy.

For Mill, Democracy becomes an end in itself rather than means to an end.

Mill's ~~view~~ view on women.

In his book 'Subjection of women', he mentions about the social discrimination against women which is found in all societies. He calls subjection of women as a form of slavery. Like Plato he suggests that women should be given opportunity to participate in public sphere.