

Traditions in Political Theory : Liberalism 1



Discipline Course-1

Semester- 1

Paper : Colonialism in India

Lesson : Traditions in Political Theory: Liberalism 1

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Introduction :

The answer to the question "what is Liberalism" is the most disputable, one reason for this is the difficulty of defining political terms as they are "essentially contested" and the meaning and references are open to debate. The second reason is during previous three hundred years almost all social, economic, political development and movement of modern western world have been associated with Liberalism thus leading to varied changes at different times. A. Arblaster has rightly said "Liberalism is not reducible to a set of general and abstract prepositions. It is a historical movement of ideas and a political and social practice" (A. Arblaster,1984 :91) Despite all this there is well understood agreement that central themes of Liberalism are individualism and Freedom with tolerance, Constitutionalism, rule of Law, Reason or Rationality as direct extension of the two. The explanation of these different themes varied greatly from period to period leading to development of two traditions of thought within liberalism **Classical Liberalism and modern Liberalism.**

The first usage of the term 'Liberal' in a political context was in European anti clerical politics, and was first employed in Spain in 1812.

John Locke, Adam Smith, Alexis de Tocqueville and in twentieth century thinkers such as Friedrich Von Hayek, Milton Friedman and Robert Nozick are associated with Classical Liberalism. Idea of egoistic individualism, negative liberty, limited government, freedom to make contracts, sanctity of private property and individual responsibility for their choices and decisions are the central idea of classical liberalism.

Modern Liberalism is best associated with the works of J S Mill, Kant Green and Hobhouse. It believes in the idea of man as a progressive being who should be allowed to develop itself in all its 'manifold diversity' and revise the idea of minimal state and negative liberty to interventionist or enabling state and positive liberty. This raises an important question, Does varied explanations means Liberalism is an incoherent ideology? The answer

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is best in words of A. Arblaster "a mere list of values does not however define a political doctrine or distinguish it from others. What matters is the World view through which they are linked to each other and the order or hierarchy in which they are arranged" (A.Arblaster,1984 :56)

Some Famous Liberals ---

John Locke,Adam Smith, Montesquieu,Thomas Jefferson,John Stuart Mill, Lord Acton, T H Green, John Dewey, John Rawls

Brief History :

Mid 17th century Europe witnessed breakdown of Feudalism, growth of market or capitalist society and rise of middle class, with these new developments the political and economic privileges of landed aristocracy and other forms of absolute and arbitrary authority was challenged and so was challenged the absolute power of Monarch based upon the doctrine of "divine rights of kings" and the authority of church.

Historically Liberalism emerged as a force opposed to religious conformity, ascribed status and political absolutism this was also influenced by Renaissance and Reformation movement as well as scientific and technological developments. Emerging as a radical emancipatory project it emphasized equal and intrinsic worth of each individual, developing individualism as central theme.

Liberalism rejects all forms of absolute and arbitrary authority. Authority is conferred neither by divine power of god nor charisma or dictates of history. Authority exists to achieve goals for which political institution is being created. The content of these goals can never be unlimited but set up by those who are under that authority and to exclude anyone's views is to devalue them because central belief of Liberalism is Individual is free and equal. With this understanding developed the idea that free and equal individuals must be so recognized in the political and legal system so to engage in varied social, commercial and other activities.

Liberals are also concerned with the right of conscience and religious toleration. They are against religious monopoly. Locke defined it as there were two distinct realms, the sacred and the secular, the political realm dealt with the goods of earthly peace and security, in this sense if a

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sovereign try to dictate how we practice our religion it oversteps its authority at the same time if a church try to dictate the secular law it oversteps the bounds of its authority. This is a reflection of Locke's sharp distinction between matters over which secular authority of state might be exercised and those over which it must not.

As said by Alan Ryan "From the middle of nineteenth century until today one strand of Liberalism has regarded capitalism as the enemy of liberty(Mill 1848,Dewey 1931)(Alan Ryan,1993 :302)This refers to different trends within Liberalism because initially it was considered important to liberate entrepreneur from oppressive government, but little later due to changed nature of capitalism and market based economies it was found important to liberate workers and consumers from the tyranny of the capitalist. This view was widely expressed in the works of modern Liberalism.

With this brief background let's discuss central themes of Liberalism.

Central Themes :

The Primacy of Individual :

For Liberals the most important central theme is the understanding that human beings are individuals and primacy of the individuals is the characteristic feature of Liberal ideology. Individual is viewed as morally prior to society and bearer of fundamental natural rights which they possess by virtue of being human. For Locke there were three such rights the right to life, liberty and property. Liberals believe in individual as equal, rational, moral and autonomous being able to decide conception of good. Kant defines the dignity and equal worth of human beings when he gives the conception of individual as 'ends in themselves and not merely as means for another's will'. Liberals give priority of 'the right' over 'the good' as per this view individual is the best judge to determine his or her interest, the individual and no one else can decide what is morally right. Individual has all the right to decide "What is good life" but State is not supposed to prescribe that good life. Central idea of Liberalism is individuals are equal and have equal moral worth and rights. This also means each individual is unique because each one is defined by qualities specific to them and each share the same status, thus equal to other.

Abstract Individualism

The assumption of Liberals that individual wants and preferences are autonomously chosen, that ignore the social context in which these are acquired or shaped is known as abstract individualism, a way of conceiving the individual in abstraction from special social and historical circumstances

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Primacy of individual has influenced the Liberal thought in different ways; emphasizing self interested and self reliant nature of individuals classical Liberals subscribe to egoistical individualism. Modern Liberals advance view of developmental form of individualism that place emphasis upon human flourishing rather than crude satisfaction of interests.

Classical Liberal	Modern Liberal
Classical Liberal's belief on egoistical individualism place emphasis on self interested and self reliant nature of individual	Propounding theory of developmental form of individualism modern Liberals place emphasis on human flourishing and not just quest for interest satisfaction.

According to Classical Liberal thinking the desires of individual are unlimited and thus C. B. Macpherson (1964, 1973) characterizes the individual of Classical Liberal theory as essentially an infinite desirer and consumer of utilities. (Maureen Ramsay, 2004:13) However representing Modern Liberalism, Mill was concerned to make a distinction between 'higher' and 'lower' pleasures and thus maximizing man's capacity for self development.

Liberals views on individual shape Liberal theory for society as well. Society is seen as collection of self sufficient individuals. For Bentham the concept of society is a fiction: "the community is a fiction's body, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its members" (Maureen Ramsay, 2004:8) In this sense general good was also assumed as simply an aggregate of each individual's interest. In contrast Modern Liberals to some extent believe that individual possess social responsibility for one another. With these varied explanations individual remain the centre of Liberalism and idea of limited government, rule of law; liberty and capitalist economy are the extension of belief in individualism.

Freedom :

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Primacy of individual leads naturally to emphasis on individual Freedom. It is the most important Liberal value because if each individual has intrinsic dignity and equal moral worth with rational capacity to make meaningful choices and to be responsible for them, then Freedom is needed to pursue and satisfy them. Classical Liberals conceive Freedom as Freedom from external constraints upon individual. Each individual being left alone to act or not to act, this conception of Liberty is negative that also defines external impediments as constraints only if they are manmade however mere inability to do a particular action is not state of unfreedom. According to Locke Freedom for individual is 'Freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the Law of Nature without asking leave or depending on the will of any other man'(Locke,1967,269)(Maureen Ramsay, 2004 :17)Mill held a negative conception of Liberty portraying Freedom as the absence of restrictions upon an individual's 'self regarding action'....the only justification for interference with individual liberty is self protection'. (Maureen Ramsay, 2004:17) This view is further illustrated in the writing of Hayek, Friedman, Nozick, Berlin. Berlin explained this in the following statement "I am normally said to be free to the degree to which no man or body of man interfere with my activity. Political liberty in this sense simply the area in which a man can act unobstructed by others. If I am prevented by others from doing what I could otherwise do ,I am to that degree unfree...coercion implies the deliberate interference of other human beings within the area in which I could otherwise act"(A.Arblaster,1984 :57)

John Stuart Mill (1806-73)

J. S. Mill, British philosopher, economist and politician provide a bridge between Classical and Modern Theories of Liberalism. On Liberty (1859), Considerations on Representative Government (1861) and The Subjection of Women (1869) are famous works of J S Mill.

With this understanding Freedom is distinguished from power or ability. According to Anthony Arblaster 'this conception of Freedom implies the absence of obstacles, and so perhaps the presence of opportunity, but not necessarily of the means to make use of the opportunity' (A. Arblaster, 1984:58) Negative Liberty equates individuals because each person is of intrinsic value and must have equal opportunity to enjoy liberty to pursue their different and competing versions of the good. But this connotation

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masks the actual inequalities which exist in the Liberal society. The negative conception of freedom defines freedom with special emphasis on freedom from the restrictions imposed by the state. As discussed by Arblaster "Freedom for Liberals continues to mean, above all, Freedom from control, compulsion, restriction and interference by the State."(A. Arblaster, 1984: 58) State interference was necessary only to protect individual rights, property, civil Liberties etc.

Giving positive conception of liberty understood as the ability to be one's own master and autonomous modern liberals gave positive notion of Liberty. Liberty was understood not just Freedom from outside constraints, but the capacity to develop and ultimately achieve self realization. T H Green(1836-82), L T Hobhouse (1864-1929) J A Hobson (1854- 1940) defined freedom not just absence of external constraints but ability of the individual to attain individuality, attain skills, knowledge and realize his or her potential and fulfillment. Inequalities in wealth, social power and education affect individual's ability to take advantage of rights and opportunity for self development. Imagine a poor who always struggles to get two course meals cannot be considered free. What is required is not a limited but an active state and to achieve this conception of Freedom State is invested with some responsibility for its citizens. Portraying State as the guarantor of individual liberty state was enabled to perform wide range of social and economic responsibilities to its citizens because unrestrained capitalism does not give each individual the same opportunities for self realization.

With these conceptions of Freedom core Liberal value remained the same that the individual right is prior to good and state is not suppose to tell people what is good for them, State therefore can only provide conditions utilizing which individual can make more responsible and independent choices. Thus the role of State altered but commitment to interests of individual and Freedom remained central.

Toleration :

Respecting the limitation of human knowledge and without claiming certainty in areas of religion or morality as we have no Archimedean point to decide what is right because it cannot be rationally justified liberals believe in tolerance. Society is not composed of homogeneous groups rather there

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may exist different groups with varied interests and beliefs, tolerance means acknowledging the right of opposed interests to exist and be pursued.

Indeed the idea of diversity is rooted in the central principle of Liberalism—individualism, because it recognizes each individual as equal and unique. Mill also highlights importance of toleration to society as well as the individual. It is guarantee of personal autonomy because it establishes set of rules as to how human beings should behave towards one another. Within society with existence of varied ideas being tolerated truth emerges because with conflict of different ideas in a debate good ideas displace bad ones and ignorance is progressively banished. Moreover Liberal State recognizing rational autonomous individual give due place to diversity as guarantor of social progress. However it does not imply support for unrestricted diversity. Toleration may be qualified in relation to views that are intolerant. Arblaster thus said “within Liberalism tolerance is linked to rationality and like Freedom is powerfully supported by skepticism. (A. Arblaster, 1984:69) Since the late 20th century many Liberals have endorsed the idea of moral neutrality, reflecting shift from Universalism to Pluralism and emphasize conflicts of values are intrinsic to human life.

Reason and Science :

According to Arblaster “Liberalism is claimed to be the application of the scientific approach to political and social life. And conversely or reciprocally, science is held to represent the outstanding expression of Liberal commitment to reason and empiricism” (A. Arblaster, 1984:82). Being a part of enlightenment that emphasized to release human kind from its bondage of superstition and ignorance Liberalism believes in the idea of “the age of reason”. Faith of Liberalism in its central theme of individual as rational autonomous being able to define and pursue his own interest has got strengthened because of influence of enlightenment rationalism. Reason provides basis upon which rival claims can be evaluated. It also enhanced belief in progress, debate, discussion and argument.

Constitutionalism :

“For as in absolute governments the King is Law, so in free countries the Law ought to be King, and there ought to be no other” Thomas Paine

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Traditionally Liberals regard State as the principal threat to the individual Freedom but they are also convinced of the need for State and government because human beings are self seeking creatures, they will use State for their own benefit and at the expense of others. To meet this danger they believe that power and authority of the State/ government should be limited. To establish Limited Government consent is the basis of Legitimate Government and Government is placed within restricted framework of Constitutional provision and Fundamental Law, which is further reinforced by the principle of Separation of power. Separation of powers means dividing different portions of the authority of the state to separate institutions where power will be allocated in a manner to act as rival to and check on the other. The power of the State could be further checked by placing of the State within the limits of established Law. Government is to be carried on according to 'rule of law'. The Law was to be impartial however in a society of vast social and economic inequalities, this impartiality may create new inequalities as Anatole France observed "The Law in its majestic equality forbids the rich as well as poor to sleep under the bridges, to beg in the streets and to steal bread" (A. Arblaster, 1984:74) Constitutionalism, rule of law and separation of power are mechanism to curb power of the State and the supposed danger of it to individual Liberty. According to Alan Ryan "Freedom of conscience, Freedom of occupational choice, privacy and family rights all place limits on what government may do" (Alan Ryan, 1993: 307) Limited governments are nonetheless active government because securing the rights of the individual will keep government busy.

State :

With the belief that balanced and free society will not develop because individuals are self seeking creatures Liberals have a belief that for protection of individual Liberty sovereign State is required, because Freedom can exist ' under the law' as John Locke put it "Where there is no Law there is no Freedom". Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau exponents of Social contract theory used the same argument as the basis of state. The purpose of the argument was to highlight the importance of the sovereign State to the individual Social Contract theorists builds the argument that State derives its political authority from the consent given by the individuals. Origin of State was explained through a hypothetical contract among people to serve their interests. It also establishes the role of the State as Umpire or Neutral Referee in society because when individuals/groups come into

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conflict the State looks after the interests of all its citizens acting as a neutral arbiter. State was regarded in Thomas Paine's words as 'a necessary evil'. It is necessary because it provides the conditions for the orderly existence at the same time it is evil because it imposes collective will upon society thus limiting Freedom of the individual.

John Locke (1632- 1704)

Author of two most important political works, A Letter Concerning Toleration (1689) and Two Treatises of Government (1690) John Locke is a key thinker of early Liberalism. He is also credited for being the philosopher of the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688 which established Constitutional Monarchy in Britain.

Classical Liberals thus believe in a minimal State, which acts using Locke's metaphor as a 'night watchman'. Its task was to secure internal order and external defense. Night watchman view of the State was defended in recent times by Nozick. However during 19th century the consequences of free capitalist socio economic order based on limited state became evident. Number of property less exploited working class grew with unlimited miseries for them. Poverty, starvation, unemployment, brutal exploitation of vast majority, monopolization of trade, inhuman working and living conditions were some of them. Change was required to meet the growing unrest among the vast majority. Thus with further development of industrialization accompanied with extreme inequalities, poverty, ignorance and disease the idea of minimal State of Classical Liberalism was challenged by Modern Liberals with the idea of interventionist or enabling state. To overcome economic inequality welfare functions of the state were increased. Progressive taxation, social legislation and welfare programme were few to be mentioned. The task of maintaining harmony between the interests of the individual and society was assigned to the state. The state was not viewed as the enemy of individual liberty rather it was assumed that the intervention of the State is required to provide conditions for the fulfillment of individual's liberty and support for its citizen by welfare program to tackle poverty, disease and ignorance. This was a welfare State, to provide social security that would cover all citizens 'from cradle to the grave'. It was a state committed to provide extensive social service to all the citizens,

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provide social and economic security that will also reduce gap between rich and poor, to provide economic security to workers through regulation of working hours, bonus, minimum wages etc. In America Liberal Welfarism developed in the administration of F D Roosevelt's 'New Deal' and reached its heights in 1960s with the 'New Frontier' policies of John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson's 'Great Society' program. Policies were introduced for unemployed, old, children and also improving civil rights of US blacks and squalor in US cities. In Britain welfare State was expanded after the second World War by the Attlee Labour government and 'five giants' (want, disease, ignorance, squalor, idleness) mentioned in the Beveridge Report 1942 was attacked.



Figure : 1

(1965 cartoon on government spending choices)

Source: (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/images/cabinetpapers/ws-074951-w454.jpg>)

T H Green, L T Hobhouse, J A Hobson,
A D Lindsay, Cole, Barker, H J Laski, J
M Keynes, supported philosophy of
Modern Liberalism

Justice :

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The idea of social justice is the most important and debatable and refers to the distribution of material rewards and benefits in society. The Liberal Theory of Justice believes in fundamental Equality of individual meaning each individual is of equal moral worth. Connected with the same is the idea that the individual should enjoy the same formal status in society, particularly in terms of distribution of rights and entitlements. Legal equality emphasizing equality before the Law and political equality is idea of formal equality. Liberals also subscribe to equality of opportunity for each individual to develop their unequal skills and abilities. However even among Liberals there is disagreement about principles of Justice, Classical Liberals endorse strict meritocracy meaning if there are inequalities of wealth and social position it is because of unequal distribution of merit or skill amongst humans or based upon factors beyond human control such as luck or chance. John Locke in the 17th century and Robert Nozick in the late 20th century developed theory of Justice on this basis. According to Nozick if individuals acquire or transfer their wealth justly, the resulting distribution of wealth even if it is unequal must be just. According to modern Liberals belief in social justice also implies in some measure social equality. In A Theory of Justice (1970) John Rawls developed defense of redistribution and welfare upon the idea of 'equality as Fairness'. He proposed the 'difference principle' and argued social and economic inequalities should be arranged to benefit the least advantaged members of the society, recognizing the need for some measure of inequality to provide an incentive to work. Classical Liberals believe that capitalist society has created the conditions in which each individual has equal opportunity to prosper according to his or her merit. Modern liberals argue unrestrained capitalism creates new forms of social injustice that privilege some and disadvantage other and seek fair equality of opportunity.

Liberalism and Democracy :

At one point Liberals looked at Democracy 'taken to the extreme' as a threat to the Liberty and property and at another Liberals entailed Democracy. Democracy has been defended not as an end in itself but as means to preserve individual and liberty. Liberal Democracy is limited Democracy with commitment to popular rule (in its limited representative form). Liberals expressed reservations about Democracy because of danger of "the tyranny of the majority" (Alexis de Tocqueville) and also the makeup of the majority in the state. To curb the menace of the majoritarianism Mill proposed system

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of plural voting to disenfranchise the illiterate and at the same time allocating more than one vote to people depending upon their level of education or social position. Mill proposed that delegating powers to elected politicians means that instead of reflecting the views of the people electors should speak for themselves because people tend to act according to their narrow interests. The earliest Liberal justification for Democracy was based on consent. It was a mechanism through which citizens could protect themselves from the encroachment of government. Protective Democracy gives citizens the scope to live their lives with minimum government intervention.

The later developments endorse Democracy and link it to the virtue of political participation. This form of Developmental Democracy gives individual right to take part in decisions that also promotes in the development of human capacities. Since the 20th century Liberal theories about Democracy have focused more on the need for consensus in society and Democracy as a system of rule that maintain equilibrium within complex and fluid modern societies.

Liberalism and Economy :

The relationship of Liberalism, market capitalism and the related role of State is very interesting because of issues of private property, inequality and class. Classical liberals' economic theory is influenced with the works of economist like Adam Smith (1723-90) and David Ricardo (1770 – 1823).

Adam Smith (1723- 90)

Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) explained systematically the working of economy in market terms. Writing at the time of wide ranging government restrictions upon economic activity, Smith wrote that market should be free from government interference because it is managed by 'invisible hand'. The idea of self regulating market was based on natural harmony amongst conflicting interests within society.

Since each individual is materially self interested, the economy also operates according to market forces, the forces of supply and demand with no guidance from outside forces and interference of government. Idea of Laissez- faire, meaning let (them) act developed the belief that the State

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should have no economic role, but should leave the economy alone. The underlined idea is the classical liberals' belief in individual's ability and independence to choose what they want and what they can of their own lives without any interference. This also reinforces that if people have abilities and skill they will prosper in the market system while the incompetent or lazy will not. One economist argued that improvement of the condition of the workers should come through 'their own efforts and self reliance rather than from Law' and advised them 'to look not to parliament, look only to yourselves'. Herbert Spencer in his work 'The man versus the State' (1884) supported the doctrine of Laissez Faire by applying Charles Darwin's principle of 'the survival of the fittest' within human society and argued those who are best suited by nature to survive, rise to the top while the less fit fall to the bottom and thus no attempt should be made by the government to interfere with inequalities of wealth. But with increasing complexities of industrial capitalist economies, their apparent inability to guarantee general prosperity and the great depression of 1930s the Classical Liberal thinking of self regarding market and the doctrine of Laissez Faire was questioned. Idea of natural harmony of interests was questioned and so was rejected the idea that intervention of the state will make things worse. Modern Liberals discussed the new directions of the economy and State action. This new economic role was advocated by economist John Maynard Keynes (1883—1946) in The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money (1936)

John Maynard Keynes 1883-1946

In The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money (1936) Keynes rejected the idea of self regulating market. He said that government can manage their economies because growth and employment levels are largely determined by the level of 'aggregate demand in the economy'.

Keynes was not recommending a gradual shift from capitalism to socialism but adjusting capitalism in a way to make it more rational and humane. Though the idea of individual initiative and responsibility in the economic field was considered as the best safeguard of personal liberty but direction of State action was reformed. It was suggested that government can 'manage'

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their economies by influencing the level of aggregate demand because if people have money the effect will ripple throughout the economy it means their capacity to buy more goods will increase and it will be the 'multiplier effect'. In the post second war period virtually all countries practiced economic management in carrying out economic reconstruction. Thus with some differences of opinion over the extent of desirable State intervention or management support for capitalism remained the basic Liberal position.

Classical Liberalism

Egoistic individualism

Negative Freedom

minimal state

free market economy

individual responsibility

safety net welfare

Modern Liberalism

Developmental individualism

positive freedom

enabling/ interventionist state

managed economy

social responsibility

cradle to grave welfare

Contemporary Liberalism :

While Locke, Kant and Mill played the most important role in shaping Liberal tradition in contemporary times the role of John Rawls is most profound. As discussed by Ashok Acharya , "two monumental treatise written by Rawls A theory of Justice(1971) and Political Liberalism(1993) have set the contemporary terms of debate and discussion on Liberalism and its values".(Ashok Acharya, 2008 :240)Using social Contract theory Rawls reconciled Liberal individualism with the principles of redistribution and Social justice. His notion of 'justice as Fairness' is based upon the belief that behind a 'veil of ignorance' (that is not knowing our social and economic position) people would choose two basic principles.

First Principle- Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic Liberties compatible with a similar system of liberties for all.

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Second Principle-Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both

(a) To the greatest benefit of the least advantaged and

(b) Attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

Equal basic liberties which according to Rawls are standard civil and political rights--- right to vote, to run for office, free speech, mobility etc must be guaranteed in a Liberal State. In a liberal State those who are least well off are also assured as good a life as possible. The second principle of Rawls is often called the Maximin principle since it explains social justice as maximizing the size of the minimum holding of social resources and is clearly inimical to any account of the State that restricts it to the defense of the property rights.

In sharp contrast to welfare State Liberalism of Rawls emerged a different position often referred as 'neoliberalism'. The position developed in the writings of Hayek, Friedman and their follower's very close to that of classical liberals from Adam Smith to Herbert Spencer. Since 1970s economic liberalism was revived and market was seen as superior to government and any form of political control. Friedman criticized Keynesianism because 'tax and spend' policies fuel inflation by encouraging government to increase borrowing without affecting the natural rate of unemployment. It was also argued that welfare state denied individual responsibility, stifled creativity and reduced efficiency.

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Figure: 2

(Social State in danger by Rodrigo

Published by www.expresso.pt)

Source:

www.toonpool.com/cartoons/social%20state%20in%20danger_100923

Reversing the trend of big government market was favored because market is self regulating, responsive with inbuilt Democratic mechanism. Competition in the market guarantees that producers produce what consumers are willing to buy; meaning consumer is king in the market. The market delivers fairness and economic justice because talented rise as it gives opportunities to rise and fall equally. With the spread of globalization 1990s witnessed massive market based restructuring of economies. Nevertheless, the failure of the free market economies to ensure sustained growth has lead to, reemergence of the new political economies in the later years of 21st century.

Liberalism in the 21st Century— Story of Success or Failure?

Twentieth century witnessed one of the most important success for Liberalism this was clearly evident in the Liberal model of Representative

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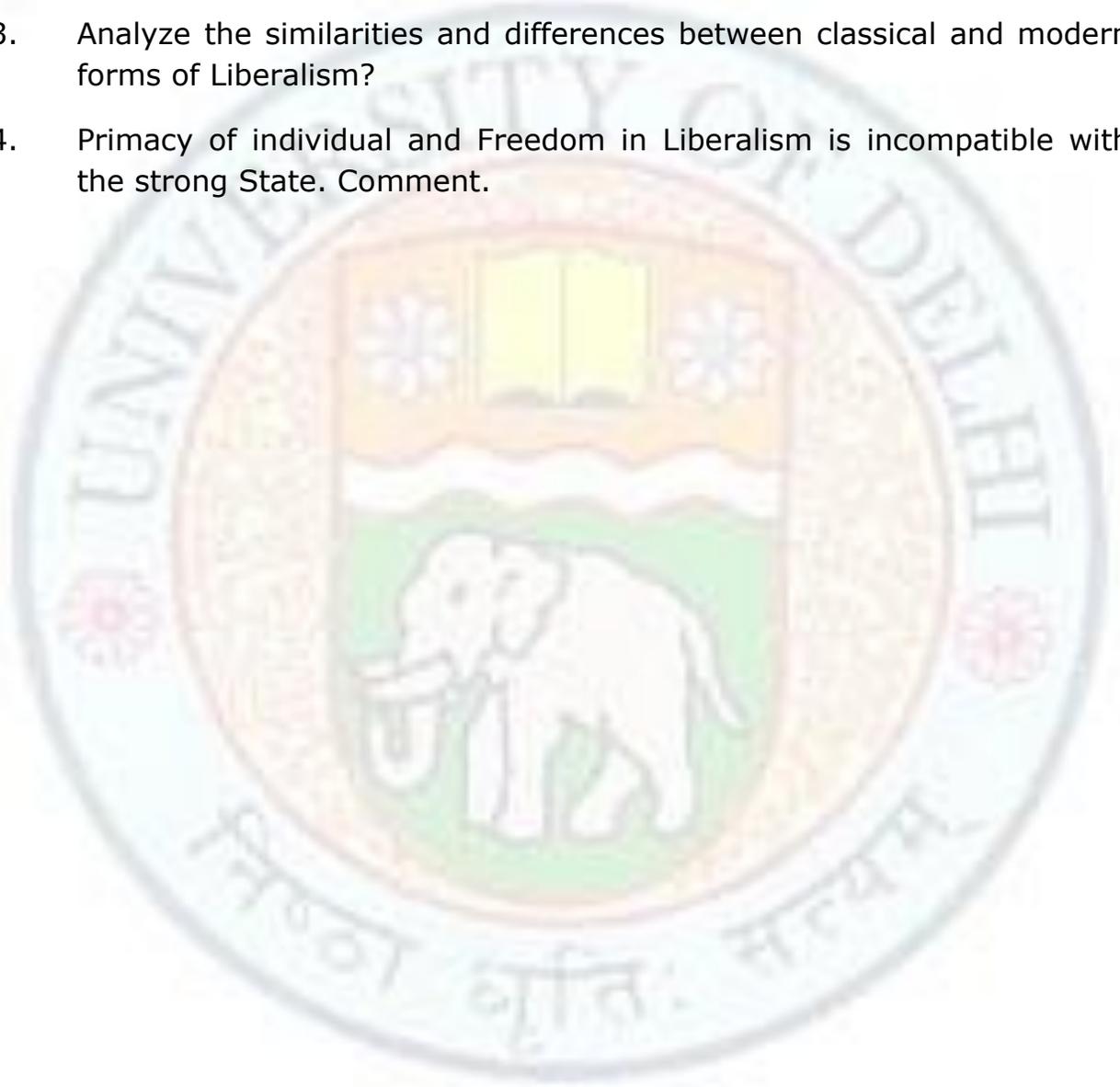
Government combined with market based economies spread remorselessly throughout the globe. Failure of Marxist regimes in all possible respects demonstrated some kind of victory of Liberalism. This view was articulated by Francis Fukuyama (1989) who proclaimed that "We are witnessing the end of history as such: that is, the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western Liberal Democracy as the final form of Human Government". In Africa, Asia and Latin America a process of Democratization was underway that also reflected the manifest superiority of Liberalism.

However Liberalism witnessed criticism from another direction for its lack of interest in political participation and active citizenry. Individual in Liberal thinking is essentially cut off from public life. Republicans complain that the liberty of the individual cannot be preserved unless the citizen is active because the liberal goal encourages them to quit the public stage and concentrate only on domestic or economic goals. To this the reply of the Liberal could be, for moderns liberty consisted in 'peaceful enjoyment and private independence'. Liberal society is an open society that gives place to different conception of good life. However Liberalism has witnessed criticism from different quarters but in words of Alan Ryan "the way in which Liberalism institutionalizes self criticism is itself a guarantee of some progress even if it is also a guarantee of permanent dissatisfaction" (Alan Ryan, 1993 : 309)

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Exercise :

1. Critically analyze the core concepts of Liberalism?
2. Trace the historical development of Liberalism. Do you think Liberalism has emerged triumphant?
3. Analyze the similarities and differences between classical and modern forms of Liberalism?
4. Primacy of individual and Freedom in Liberalism is incompatible with the strong State. Comment.



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