

EQUALITY

- Equality is a difficult notion in politics. Equality refers to equal enjoyment of rights by all citizens and absence of discrimination. Equality also means equality of treatment and reward for all. However a solute equality is difficult to realize, asthma capabilities and abilities if people are different.
- Equality also means provision of adequate opportunities to all, without discrimination on the basis of status, creed and caste. Hence no person or group can enjoy special privileges. However discrimination if any should be based on reasonable grounds.
- Equality also advocates a just and fair distribution of wealth and resources and a minimum gap between rich and poor.

TYPES OF EQUALITY

- **Legal equality**- it means that people are equal in the eyes of law and they are entitled to equal protection. It also means equal protection of life and liberty under law.
- **Natural equality**- this rests on the principle that nature has created everyone as equal.
- **International equality**- it means all nations of the world should be treated equally irrespective of their geographical, demographic, economic and military considerations. It also means that international disputes should be settled through peaceful means.
- **Social equality**- it means equal rights and opportunities for development for all classes of people without any discrimination. It also means absence of special privileges for any class or caste. Prohibition of discrimination against any on the basis of caste, colour, creed, religion, sex and place of birth.
- **Political equality**- means citizens should possess similar political rights and should have similar voice in working of the government.
- **Civil equality**- it means equality of all before law. Equal rights should be available to all.

LIBERTY & EQUALITY RELATIONSHIP

- Liberty and equality are sometimes considered in opposition. Liberty means absence of restraints whereas to achieve equality Some amounts of restraints are needed. For example liberty of private property cannot be restrained for the sake of equality. Also in order to create equality in society powers of the state needs to be increased and increase in the powers of the state threatens liberty.
- However liberty and equality can be considered compatible. The essential condition of both liberty and equality is peace, order and security. Also without equality democracy cannot exist and without democracy liberty cannot exist.

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.