

HS8.101 Making of Contemporary World

Assignment 3

Q:

What are the tensions between Liberty and Equality?

Read the following to answer:

- Chapters 2 (Towards a Free Society) and 4 (Towards Equality) of Paul Spicker, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* (London: The Policy Press, 2006).

Word Limit: 800-1000 words

Ans:

Inconclusive discussions on Liberty and Equality have repeatedly occurred by countless writers and thinkers for several decades. Thanks to both terms' mutual exclusiveness and compatibility, we can say! Neither liberty nor Equality is the basis of all rights. At the same time, liberals cannot have restrictions to follow a specific set of rules and regulations as they are supposed to be free to make their own decisions and proceed according to their will. However, there must be some fixed matrix to ensure Equality in society, which implies both concepts are equally essential and contradicting, causing trouble to the thinkers.

Liberty is often considered a precondition for Equality. For instance, the right to form political parties or organisations in a democracy signifies Equality but requires freedom of speech and expression first. It would help if you were a liberal to sustain or achieve your position of Equality. Freedom of assembly means that people can form groups without any hindrance. The tension between the two conceptions of socio-political virtues, liberty, and Equality, has dominated the political globe since the American Revolution. Liberty being pervasive is easy to take for granted; however, inequality is also evident. Laws promote liberty.

More the laws are liberty, but when the laws seek an end, liberty still ceases to exist. Violations occur when there are no laws to protect one's freedom or provide freedom and liberty. The common understanding of liberty focuses on negative, positive, and psychological freedom. The freedom of one identity may infringe on the freedom of another. The extent of freedom relies on the value of the actions it protects, which causes the concept of Equality to suffer.

Liberty and democracy are closely related. Representation of democracy as the majority's rule is widespread; however, the pluralist understanding of democracy is distinctive, where the rights of the minority come before what the majority wants. A coherent human rights mechanism is only feasible if human dignity balances liberty and equality's conflicting interests. Some socioeconomic issues restrict freedom, and thus Equality suffers or vice versa. Factors such as poverty restrict one individual from freedom through material need, which obstructs the capacity to act; through economic limitations, which obstruct the ability to choose; and through exclusion from participation in society, therefore, preventing economically backward sections of society from exploring their social rights leading to inequality among diverse sections.

Citizenship is inevitably exclusive and inclusive; membership needs to distinguish between citizens and non-citizens; Members of a particular nation or state are certainly more privileged than non-members. It is problematic for egalitarians who want equal rights and opportunities for everyone and see all with an equal eye.

Consider the example of Refugees who are forced to live in another country due to wars or any other reasons; they do have the right to live and make a living as they are free as people, but they are not treated equally to the nation's citizens and treating them the same way as legal citizens would result in increasing demand of resources which are limited leading to many more obstacles in the country's growth. People cannot be equal without Citizenship. However, can they be equal with it as some aspects of society could hinder one's freedom for the sake of others? Equality continues the tensions between Equality and liberty, divisions based on religion being one of the most known factors. The coin's side says that Equality can mean Equality of freedom, Equality of outcome, and opportunities that require equal or no disadvantages to everyone, which is an extreme and rare case.

Moreover, it is practically impossible to give Equality in freedom as this concept contradicts the essence of liberty again, creating problems in the two things. The considerable gap that emerged and the eruption of these words, i.e., Equality and liberty, can be explained conveniently by giving an example.

Recently, the protest in Poland rang bells that affected every society, section, and culture. This protest emphasised the provision, which would entail every woman in Poland to abort the child if she did not wish to bear future generations. Earlier, this provision restricts only to women who torment to face sexual offences like rape or molestation. But Poland's women's identity demanded provision extends to every other woman in Poland. They emphasised this need through the slogan #MyBodyMyChoice. So, this example provides a clear picture of the existing tensions between liberty & Equality. Equality in the above example speaks about extending the medical termination provision to every woman who encounters/can encounter risk to her life if she bears the child.

On the contrary, liberty demands the provision to every woman even if she is capable & at that age, bearing a baby is mostly sort after can abort the child. Therefore, liberty raises the slogan of #MyBodyMyChoice, whereas Equality supports #SufferesChoice. The conceptions conflict at certain places, and the debates usually end with distorted conclusions at the shutdown.