CHAPTER – 2

CONCEPT OF MAN
FOUNDATION OF JAY PRAKASH’S SOCIO POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

As a matter of fact, almost all philosophers so as to say all philosophies are in reality engaged with the problem of man. Any sound philosophy, which wants to change the world must have a clear and critical understanding of the concept of man. Therefore, in this chapter, we propose to discuss JP’s concept of man along with a general idea of concept of man.

2.1 MAN IN SOCIO-POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

It is the ‘individual man’ which is the force behind all development of man, i.e., his social, cultural, spiritual etc. He is the force behind all development of the society also.

Man is a social being and he expresses his nature by creating and recreating an organization which guides and controls his behaviour in different ways. This organization is called society. It liberates and limits the activities of man. It sets up certain standards for him to follow. In all ages society may have some imperfections. But it can not be denied that it is a necessary condition for fulfillment of human life. Man is dependent on the society for his protection, promotion of his comfort, for his nurture, education, equipment, opportunity and many other multitude of definite services. Not only this, man is dependent on
society for the content of his thought, his dream, his aspirations, even many of his maladies of mind and body.

Aristotle long back said that man is a social animal. The essential fact is that man always belongs to a society or group of one kind or the other and without it he can not exist. But the relationship between the individual and society, is ultimately one of the most profound of all the problems of social philosophy. It is in fact a philosophical, rather than a sociological problem, because it involves the question of values.

From time immemorial man has been creating his societies to fulfil his needs. Man has his own conception of society. These conceptions may be imperfect sometime, which can not cope with the existing or the changing socio-political set up. Further, values have been changing. But one important point is that, the society has to continue.

Since man's relation with the society is a philosophical or psychological rather than a social question, hence time and again thinkers or thinking minds have been brooding over an ideal structure, ideal set up. Whenever society has gone astray, thinking minds come up for a solution. Jay Prakash Narayan's socio-political ideas has certainly contributed to the socio-political philosophy by advocating peoples power, communitarian society, partyless and participatory democracy and above all total revolution.
2.2 MARX'S CONCEPT

According to Marx, as a living material being man is endowed with natural powers of life. He is an active natural being. Man has certain needs, which guides and directs him towards objects through which he tries to satisfy and externalize his natural being. But Marx also says that as a natural being, he is also passive. He is a suffering, conditioned and limited creature like animals and plants. Again man is not merely a natural being, he is a human natural being. He is a being for himself. He is a species being. He has to confirm and manifest him as such both in his being and in his knowing. Man introduces external objects to his world. He tries to remove the objects from its natural state and makes of it an object of human needs that is a humanized object. "He does not limit himself to circling the object, but as instead, he subdues it, conquers it and wrenches it from its natural and immediate state to put it on a human level. Human needs characterize man as an active social being and his activity consists of creating a human world, that does not exist by itself outside of man. Man is a creative being who changes nature and by changing nature also changes his own nature. He is a productive and transforming being."

2.3 GRAMSCI'S CONCEPT

Philosopher like Gramsci says that man is not natural, because a natural man does not create himself, a natural man can not objectivize his faculties. Man tries to know himself, affirm himself and create himself. He tries to bring out the faculties within himself. Man is conditioned no doubt by natural and social circumstances, but rises above them and changes the conditions which condition
his life. "But this man can do not separately or independently, but collectively as a species being. He interacts with other men and also with nature. The social world is created by interacting individuals. In Marx's words, society is the product of men's reciprocal action.

Gramsci was concerned with the question what a man can become of himself. He was not concerned with what man as he is. Man can dominate his own destiny, he is the maker of himself and the creator of his own life. According to Gramsci, "Man not only conceptualizes but takes part in the process of human social development." Gramsci's concept of man is a man as a practical political being "It is the question of man's awareness of himself. Man is a social being who wants to understand who he is and what he can do and become of himself. But becoming himself is connected with the notion of others' becoming themselves. Thus man is not simply himself, but his whole species. Man is a collective notion, it is not individual in that sense." Gramsci observed that a man of action is a true philosopher and a philosopher is of necessity a man of action. Marx also criticized the 'Philistine' philosophers who denied the importance of action or praxis. According to Gramsci, philosophy must be political-practical, if it is to continue to be philosophy, the source of the unity of theory and practice.

"Praxis as the basis of man as a socio-historical being is also the basis of man's relation to social reality."

2.4 GANDHI'S IDEAS OF MODERN MAN'S PSYCHE

Since Gandhi had a deep influence on Jay Prakash Narayan, we propose to discuss the concept of Man as envisaged by Gandhi. Gandhi believed that human
nature is a mixture of good and bad. Man must make constant effort to develop the good qualities and remove bad qualities and must adopt moral means in this process. Similarly society consists of good and bad customs. They must make constant efforts to remove bad things from the society.

According to Gandhi, Man is in the process of evolution towards absolute truth, He was of the opinion that, those who want to practise truth and to serve the creation of God, must lead a simple and regulated life. To Gandhi, Individual Swaraj means control over oneself or rule over oneself. Such self-governing individual and societies are free from many problems. In such societies self rule leads to minimum role of government which in turn leads to decentralization of economic and political power.

According to Gandhi, closely related to the concept of man is the environment. Environment is a human problem. No single factor according to Gandhi has contributed more to the phenomenon of world wide erosion of natural resources and ecological imbalances than the great possibilities that have been opened up by the objective of getting rich quickly with the help of mechanization.

Gandhi was concerned with the 'updated' man. In the present time, a man is in quest of getting more and more. In his pursuit of 'lust' and to conquer the nature, a man is getting alienated from nature, society and himself. Gandhi wanted to uplift human being from the Quagmire of 'greed' and 'lust'. He was advocating minimization of our wants and he wanted to transform, uplift and integrate man with society and nature.

Gandhi’s concept of growth and development of the individual is not one of an isolated individual. He is not cut off from the society, but an integrated part of
the social system, trying to uplift himself and in this process uplift the society, the nation, and the world community. Gandhi thought of the upliftment of the individual as an instrument of social change.

According to Gandhi, ‘Individual’ is more important. “Man should be the measure of all, on the contrary, he is a stranger in the world, that he has created.”5 Gandhi’s mission was emergence of a new socio-economic order based on justice and fair play. Such an era can come within a short period and with lesser tension and strains, if efforts are made to change the social system and the individual simultaneously.

Gandhi criticized the consumerist civilization, because they carry the seeds of decay in civilization themselves. He believed that civilization is destroying our value and alienating the individual. According to him Rome and Egypt suffered, due to material affluence. The relatives and friends of Krishna too diminished when they became too rich. Modern civilization represents the forces of evil and darkness and hence it is immoral.

So, according to Gandhi, material needs do not ensure happiness. One who renounces all the cravings which leads to sufferings, and derives his contentment from within himself, is said to be ‘Sthit Pragana’ or ‘Samadhishtha’. According to him pleasure and pain are felt through our five senses. He regards a person a ‘Yogi’ or stable in spirit, who keeps his senses in control. His view is that human body is never for indulgence. It is solely for service. Renunciation is the secret of happy life.

Generally it is believed that change in the system alone would automatically change the people – their attitudes, motivations etc. Similarly it is
believed that changes in personal lives would automatically remove the unjust social conditions. But Gandhi gave equal importance to the individual and the system. While he made efforts to change the socio-economic and political systems he laid equal rather greater emphasis on radical changes in aspirations, motivations and value patterns for individual in the society. He was not suggesting that the individual would first perfect himself and then change the society, or change the society first and then its members would acquire new qualities, but he suggested a process in which individual and social change continually react and reinforce each other.

2.5 JP’S CONCEPT OF MAN

The socio-political philosophy of Jay Prakash Narayan centers on the problem of man. His is a man-centred philosophy. The philosophical ideas of Jay Prakash Narayan touches upon various aspects of human life – social, political, economic and moral. The very basis of his philosophical thinking is his concept of man – his nature, destiny and role in society. Without studying his concept of man his philosophy can not be properly understood, or there is the likelihood of misunderstanding or misinterpreting him. But, at the same time probably it should not be taken into consideration that his concept of man is to be accepted by all totally. Our mission only is to have a proper understanding of the foundation upon which his philosophy stands.

In this chapter, therefore, we propose to examine JP’s concept of man to have a correct understanding of his social, economic, political and moral philosophy. According to him man is a socio-organic being, he is partly the
product of nature and partly that of society. As a matter of fact, "Throughout his life one single factor guided his thought process i.e., his concern for the human person and his growth, and he tried to place Man in the center of the picture." JP was interested only in the human person. Any ideology, any system or the establishment of any institution was a matter of secondary consideration to him. They have importance provided they serve the human interest best. These are the means for the promotion of the human person and he is not at all bothered to abandon, reject or change them if they do not serve the purpose. In other words, according to JP, in everything man has to be the measure of all things. Protagoras, the Greek philosopher said, ‘Man is the measure of all things,’ (the best known statement of Protagoras). “And the Hans Gita of the Mahabharat says, ‘Na Manushyat Sresthatarang hi Kinsit.’ ‘There is nothing higher than man.’ Dada Dharmadhikari writes in his ‘Philosophy of Total Revolution.’ “And I can understand their saying this, because in this universe, in the creation of God, there is no species so responsible as a human being. The Gods have no responsibility. They are not required to answer for their good or bad deeds. Other animals also are not responsible for their own lives. It is man alone who is Karmayoni – one who is responsible for his own life. And in democracy every man in himself is complete, that is responsible for his own life as well as the life of his neighbour.”

Jay Prakash Narayan wanted to build up a society which will make man the center of everything. In his ‘Towards a New Society’, he says that, man is not only the center of the world, but ‘he stands in the center of society.’ In another place he says, “I happen to be an individual, who believes in ‘man as the measure of all things,’ who believes deeply in the humanistic philosophy ... based on the belief in
the universality and the supremacy of the human spirit." So it can be assumed that in JP’s philosophy one factor is constant, i.e., the human person. According to him, all structures and institutions should be judged in relation to the needs of the human person. The institutions which are harmful or unhelpful to the human person should be modified or discarded completely.

Here we propose to discuss the concepts which are very near to the concept of man and JP’s views regarding these concepts.

2.5.1 Man and Society

Man is a social animal and the individual is the product of society. Both nature and necessity makes man social. It is also known to all that because man lives in society in the company of other persons, that his conduct is evaluated as right or wrong. Moral judgement of the actions of man has a bearing on the society he lives in. It is also agreed that no man can achieve success or pleasure in his own efforts. It is not possible for a man to achieve what he wants by living outside any society. The materials needed for getting pleasure can not be collected without the co-operation of other human beings. Man lives with his fellowmen in collaboration and co-operation with other men. Thus society is natural and necessary for man to enable him to grow to his best. Man and society cannot be separated from each other. Society is very essential for the growth of the individual. The mental and intellectual development of man depends upon the society he lives in. The personality of man develops from his society. Society preserves the cultural heritage and transmits it to the next generation. Society provides freedom as well
as restrictions as boundaries to one's potentialities. It moulds the attitude, the beliefs, morals and ideals of the individuals.

Although the individual is the product of society sometimes the individual may have some conflict with the society. The individual may have acquired personality which is incompatible with the circumstances in which he finds himself. The conflict between individual and society may arise also from the deterioration of the social system. But as a matter of fact the relationship between individual and society is interconnected. They are both inter-dependant. They both interact and depend on one another. Both are complementary as well as supplementary to each other.

According to the sociologists, society is not limited to human beings alone. Animals also need societies for the fulfillment of sexual instincts and physical needs. But, the most important thing is that culture is irrelevant to animals. Man depends upon society, not only for food and protection, but also for education equipment, opportunity, content of his thoughts and aspirations. Many of our functions are animal like. Man is also an animal, "but with a very large brain and ability to talk." Animals are devoid of any touch of civilization, therefore they need no society, in the sense man needs. It is man alone who is endowed with intelligence from which culture and language proceed. Culture is the possession of man alone. Without culture man would be left out in a animal society. Society preserves our culture and transmits it to succeeding generations.

Therefore, no study of man can be satisfactory if man is treated as an individual having no relation at all to his fellowmen. In fact the individual and the society can not be visualized as two distinct entities. According to Socrates, "Man
without society is merely a dumb driven animal and society without man is absurd and meaningless. Man needs society to realize his basic needs and to safeguard his life and property. Science, art, culture and all other human values can be developed and become meaningful only in the social context. Qualities of man becomes values when applied in society only.

Accordingly, to JP also man is a social animal and is endowed with a social nature. Further, the relation of the individual to a society is not like that of the grain of sand to the sand dune. The relationship is rather like that of the living cell to the living organism. Man always lives in organic relationship with other men. It is the totality of these relationships that constitutes society. Society is not mere sum of separate individuals.

JP believes that man is a social being by nature and he lives and dies in society. Every individual man is unique and has a distinct individuality, but his uniqueness and individuality has meaning and purpose only when he is a member of society. Social nature of man makes him crave for society and social life and he is fashioned into what he is by society.

JP is of the opinion that being a social animal, it is necessary that, for the full development of human nature, the primary community, i.e., the society where man lives, should be such that he is also to establish personal relationships and this way he can live his life in a meaningful association with other members of the community. JP emphasized the importance of constructing such a society, where, "the development of the individual and the development of society as a whole are made dependent upon and complementary to each other."
JP believed in the Marxian Ideal 'from each according to his capacity and to each according to his needs, because of its voluntary character. In this maxim, there is no imposition or force. Like Gandhi, he emphasized the need for the readiness of the individual on the one hand and that of the community on the other to die for each other. When such an attitude emerges there is bound to be real development and growth. Therefore, society should be ordered in a way which promotes such an attitude.

Along with voluntary willingness to live for the society, individuals should restrict themselves in the matters of consumption and enjoyment of luxury. Man has the right for good nourishing food, but should not go in for excess “clothes should be pleasing to the eye and agreeable to the touch, but there should be no excess nor craze for fashion and wastefulness; dwelling should be modest without the least ostentation.”

But these should be done voluntarily and not imposed. It implies that, the individual is to develop a value system by which he begins to live for society. Voluntary limitation of wants is necessary from the democratic and human point of view. “We should deny ourselves, so that our fellowmen may have a little.”

“Unless the individual is voluntarily prepared to limit his wants and freedom in the interest of his fellow human beings, equality, freedom, and fellowship can never become realities.”

JP, therefore advocates a new values system through which the individual can develop a suitable attitude of mind. For this spiritual regeneration is necessary. The new value system would be such – the individual begins to identify the good of all with his own good; he begins to make sacrifices for the sake of the common good; he begins to discipline his desire for more and higher status and to promote
the welfare of others and finally he begins to place duty above his rights. Through this value system JP wants to emphasize the noble ideal, the ideal of 'brotherhood' i.e., to be human is to regard all men as brothers. Not only brotherhood, but 'universal brotherhood' i.e., to be a citizen of the world, to wish every human being life, liberty and happiness.

2.5.2 The Role of the Society towards Individual

JP has high regard for man and his role in reshaping and building up this world. According to him, society should give more importance to human hands rather than machine. As a matter of fact, machines are also the creation of human brain and hands. He fully agrees with E.F. Schumacher as regard the role of human person in the matter of work. In his words, "no better machine have been made than the two hands of men"\textsuperscript{15}

It is the responsibility of the society to shape the characters of its citizens. In other words the character and kind of citizens depend upon the kind of social system. That means "a social system has to be judged by the kind of human beings it produces."\textsuperscript{16}

According to JP, society should build up the character of the individual no doubt, but at the same time it has to help the people to stand on their own legs and to do for themselves all that they possibly can with the available resources. Only then help from the government bring about that massive development which everyone looks for today. Moreover, there is need for a new social system which will enable boys and girls stand on their own feet, to become independent, to be able to face problems of life.
Society should not suppress the individual. It should encourage the individual to stand on his own. A healthy nation can be built only in a climate of freedom. Society should not maintain such type of discipline as would create fear in the minds of the individuals. "A nation can not be built by fear..."17 (J.P. made this comment in response to the claim of Indira Gandhi regarding the new spirit of discipline and morale during emergency in the country).

If society concentrates only on the development of the environment to the neglect of the individual, it will be a great mistake. Again, at the same time it is not enough to improve human nature alone, to the neglect of the environment. "Both must be changed, reformed and modified; so that within the right social environment the already trained individual functions as a disciplined human being who can subjugate his own ambitions and desires to the social good."18

From the above discussion of JP's views about the role of the individual, it can be assumed that individual and society is not antagonistic to each other. They have complementary role to play on each other; instead of exploiting each other. Both have obligations, as well as rights and these must be mutually respected and promoted. Though ultimately every thing is meant for the growth of the individual, one can not develop at the cost of the other.

2.5.3 Concept of Freedom

As concept of Man is central to the philosophy of Jay Prakash Narayan, the concept of freedom is central to the concept of Man. Man for freedom and freedom for man. In a broad sense, freedom is the underlying theme of JP's entire thinking.
As concept of man or development of human person is the main theme behind JP's socio-political philosophy, hence freedom is the core of his philosophy.

The ultimate goal of JP's socio-political thinking was the establishment of true freedom by which the individual can develop himself. During his early life, 'freedom' was one of the most commonly heard words in India. The freedom fighters both moderates and extremists of the freedom movement often used this word as they fought for India's freedom. Moreover, the fact that India was a colonial country made JP conscious of the value of freedom more and accept it as the basis for a proper understanding of the human person. Gandhi also influenced his understanding of and esteem for human freedom.

Initially, JP had the conception of political freedom only, i.e., to free India from the colonial rule. But when he was exposed to Marxism, during his stay in USA, his concept of freedom became wider and it included freedom from every form of injustice and inequality. He realized that freedom should reach the unreached; i.e., freedom must mean freedom for all, even the lowliest, and this freedom must include freedom from hunger and poverty also. He began to dream of freedom in all aspects of life and of universal brotherhood. In his own words, "It was then (at the time of the first non-co-operation movement of Gandhi) that freedom became one of the beacon lights of life, and it has remained so ever since. Freedom, with the passing of the years, transcended the mere freedom of my country and embraced freedom of man everywhere and from every sort of trammel – above all, it meant freedom of the spirit. This freedom has become a passion of life, and I shall not see it compromised for breed, for power, for security, for prosperity, for the glory of the state or for anything else."
During his life time, we can notice that he was constantly supporting the idea of freedom and to achieve it for the masses had undergone different political, ideologies, at different stages of his life. He did not hesitate to reject any political system which is not compatible to human freedom. According to JP, freedom is more important than food, clothing, education, health, progress, religion etc. Freedom stands above all these, however he fully appreciated the value of all these. He is not much worried if the pace of progress is slower, provided freedom and democracy are also guaranteed to us. In the same way, he was not at all concerned about the religious affiliations of the people, but he is very particular about that, they are free and happy and prosperous.

JP also expressed his views regarding the term ‘Swaraj.’ According to him, Free India meant Socialist India, and Swaraj the rule of the poor and downtrodden. According to Gandhi also ‘Swaraj’ was not mere independence from Britain, but an independence from every thing that is oppressive in the society.

The dictionary meaning of Freedom is being free, personal or civil liberty, liberty of action etc. Freedom is used in different senses. Broadly there are two aspects of freedom, (1) Positive or freedom for action and (2) Negative or freedom from interference. “On the positive side, freedom implies that the individual has the freedom of thought, speech and action, the freedom of self-determination and self-realization.”20 Because man is not only an animal, he is a spiritual as well as a moral being. The spiritual or moral nature of man obviously implies his freedom, i.e., the power to do something spontaneously. In the positive sense freedom means the enjoyment of certain positive opportunity that are necessary for the
development of individual personality. The negative aspect of freedom implies that there is the absence of unreasonable external and internal barriers and interferences. Thus both positively and negatively, freedom means a state of liberty to do some activity without any condition of any type except his own will.

There are many kinds of freedom, such as freedom of thought, and speech, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of worship, freedom of movement, freedom in the use of property, freedom of occupation etc. In JP's statement of policy. We can find his specific concept of freedom, which can be described as follows:

JP mentioned the following freedoms-


**Freedom is natural to man**

According to JP, freedom is natural to man, i.e., man is free by nature, that "people's instinct is always in favour of freedom..." and that no one has the right to force his opinions on others. He even expressed doubts whether the majority can impose its views over the minority in a democracy. Moreover he would not even tolerate efficiency at the cost of liberty or humanity.
Freedom should embrace every aspect of human life in society

JP was of the opinion that freedom should permeate and embrace every aspect of human life, i.e., education, social relationships, occupation etc. It is interesting to note that Sebast L. Raj considers him to be even greater than Gandhi in his perception of the meaning of freedom. Ajit Bhattacharjee also writes, "Throughout his life, any threat to freedom, anywhere, provoked an instant response from him."²²

Freedom is not unrestricted

JP recognized the uniqueness of human person, in his freedom. That is the reason he has given top priority to freedom. But at the same time it should be remembered that he is not in favour of unrestricted freedom. If freedom is unrestricted no one can enjoy freedom. Again according to JP, freedom is not just individual freedom alone, it includes collective freedom too, e.g., freedom of the group community and nation.

Negative Freedom

JP also has a list of negative freedoms namely:

(1) Freedom from poverty,

(2) Freedom from economic exploitation, domination and injustice.

(3) Freedom from ignorance.
One most interesting and important point is that unless the evil aspects implied in these negative freedoms are eradicated, any declaration or even constitutional guarantee of the positive freedoms such as freedom of expression, association, movement, religion etc. will be meaningless. "As long as negative factors prevail people cannot really exercise or enjoy their positive freedoms."\(^{23}\)

The positive freedoms mentioned by JP are all guaranteed in the Indian constitution. But the majority of the people are unable to exercise or enjoy them because they have not achieved the negative freedoms mentioned by JP.

### 2.5.4 Equality

According to Swami Vivekananda equality without freedom will be slavery and freedom without equality will be licence and anarchy. "Some thinkers like De Tocqueville and Lord Acton emphatically proclaim that freedom and equality are incompatible. Both exist in invert ratio, i.e., more of freedom, less of equality and vice versa."\(^{24}\)

The concept of equality is a crucial one in a world in which so many differences exist among men. Every modern constitution has some notion of human equality inscribed as fundamental law. The concept of equality can not be understood in an abstract manner, but only relatively and in the concrete context. "Equality is not identity of treatment or reward. There can be no ultimate identity of treatment so long as men are different in wants, capacities and needs."\(^{25}\)

Inequalities gifted by nature are an unavoidable fact and it has to be accepted in the society. "Injustice arises as much from treating unequals equally as from treating equals unequally."\(^{26}\)
Apart from natural inequalities, there are inequalities created by the society based upon birth, wealth, knowledge, religion, etc. Equality also can be understood in negative and positive sense. Negatively, equality was associated with “the end of feudal, social, economic etc. privileges and positively, it means the availability of opportunity, so that every one can have equal chance to develop his personality. Therefore equality means -

“(1) Absence of special privileges. It means that the will of one is equal to the will of any other. It implies equality of rights; (2) That adequate opportunities are laid open to all ...opportunity should be given to everyone to realize the implications of his personality; (3) All must have access to social benefits and no one should be restricted on any ground. The inequalities by birth or because of parent and hereditary causes are unreasonable and (4) Absence of economic and social exploitation.”

JP attaches great importance to equality, as freedom and equality both are very closely connected and interdependent. According to JP, as freedom does not mean unrestricted freedom, equality does not mean arithmetical equality. He recognizes the natural differences among individuals in the possession of wealth, talents beauty, health etc. “He therefore emphasizes the need for equal opportunity for all rather than mere arithmetical equality.” According to him every person should be offered equal opportunity in life, so that he can freely decide his destiny. He has expressed his ideas about equality in relation to three problems of the society. Out of these two are existing in Indian society, one is caste and the other is untouchability. The third one can be found in all cultures and nations, i.e.,
discrimination against women. JP’s views about these three types of equalities can be discussed as follows:

(1) Caste and Untouchability

JP considered caste system to be one great obstacle in the path of our progress and condemns it. “He rejects outright the fourfold division of society by Manu and says that the functional classification of the people into Sudra’s, Vaishas, Kshtriyas abd Brahmins is not tenable today.” He says that a society that classifies its people into high, low or untouchables on the basis of their birth, can not be called a democratic society. He considers the system of caste hierarchy and untouchability as the greatest enemy of democracy in India. Therefore, later on when he advocated a Total Revolution he emphasized that, total revolution in the social sphere, would mean the eradication of caste system.

JP was very much worried about the condition of the Harijans and tribals in India. He pointed out how they are suffering from economic poverty and social discrimination and backwardness and he expressed his anxiety over this problem in many of his speeches and writings. He was of the opinion that they should be given opportunity to join the mainstream of life. Otherwise there can not be any genuine growth in the society.

However, the elimination of the caste system and untouchability is not an easy task. It can not be done politically. It depends also upon education and economic upliftment. He put forward a few suggestions for the solution of this problem. These are –
(a) People who are interested in bringing about any change should live with these downtrodden people and win their confidence by serving them and working for their welfare.

(b) On the other hand, the Harijans should take some concrete steps like refusing to carry away the dead cow etc.

(c) The caste Hindus should discard the sacred thread which distinguishes them from the Harijans.

(d) Inter caste marriage is another possible solution to the problem.

(2) Problem of women (Discrimination against women)

JP emphasized the importance of women emancipation. While admitting the natural differences between men and women, JP strongly opposes the discriminatory treatment that the society imposes on women to suppress them and reduce them to a mere secondary role. In order to construct a new society, this attitude of the society should be changed, so that every person can enjoy real equality. He considered employment to be the most effective weapon that will bring a real change in the condition of women. He firmly believes that proper employment for women would lead to a change in the condition of their lives. Sebast L Raj writes, “JP thinks that not enough has been done for the welfare and emancipation of women. He regrets that not even the educated and well-informed people are serious about this fundamental issue. Moreover women themselves are not courageous enough to assert their rights and to demand proper treatment....”

According to JP, this situation or plight of women is the outcome of ‘old ideas’
about the role of women in society. People in general and women in particular are under the influence of these ‘old ideas’.

According to JP, there should be no discrimination between men and women in matters of education or employment and he wants women to be treated equally in every respect. He asserts that women have a role to play in changing society. His call to women to launch a revolutionary movement is not only for their emancipation but also for building a new society. Therefore JP is of the opinion that the women should launch a revolutionary movement for building a new society, where they would get their equal rights with men leading to their emancipation.

However according to Sebasti L Raj, JP has not offered any real solution to these three problems of inequality. He again writes, “JP is against any division of society on the basis of birth or sex or even on the basis of function. There is absolutely no place in any society for such a division and JP is perfectly justified in condemning it. Equality demands that no ascriptive standard is utilized to stratify society. The most effective remedy is a change of heart or a change of attitude. This can come about only through persuasion and education. External steps like special legislations, concessional treatments etc. may help to some extent. But if there has to be a permanent solution to these problems one has to look primarily to the inner dispositions of the individuals and groups. Such an inner ‘conversion’ is needed both on the part of the victims as well as on the part of the exploiters or oppressors.”
2.5.5 People's Power

One of the most important aspects of JP's socio-political thinking is his emphasis on people's power. He was convinced that the masses have been deprived of their legitimate power. He wanted to restore to the masses this 'lost' power. Therefore, he proposes a type of 'polity' in which power will be decentralized and the individual will act as the sovereign, "without becoming a tyrant to any one else." His primary contribution to political thought and to the concept of revolution is his call for the establishment of people's power. This call is based on his faith in the human person and his power. He conceives people's power as both the end and the means. It is only through people's power a revolution or change is possible. According to him, development, progress, change or revolution is not possible with the efforts of the state alone. It is possible only with the active participation of the people. Whether it is a "violent revolution or a non-violent one." "...The people is like Hanuman. There is endless strength in the people. It is a question of expressing this strength; of organizing it, of giving this strength a voice, of giving it limbs... the people appear to be absolutely unconscious; dead! And the same people the very next moment perform unimaginable feats—thrones topple, systems perish, government change, society gets transformed. The people do all that."

JP's call for the establishment of people's power and a decentralized power structure is relevant and applicable to all sphere of human life - social, political, economic and religious.... Human dignity and human growth demands that each person has a definite and vital role in deciding his own destiny. He may need the assistance of individuals and the various structures of society for his life and
growth. But no individual or structure can claim authority to decide for him. Any type of imposition or compulsion from above or from another, without just reasons is destructive of the victimized individual and ultimately of humanity itself. Therefore, decentralization of power is the only solution.

2.5.6 JP's Views about the spiritual Man

According to JP, "man is both matter and spirit and his life must fulfill both his material and spiritual needs." However, he emphasizes that humanity should learn to rise above different religions, ideologies etc. JP observes that reason alone is not sufficient for man to shape a better future for himself and recognizes the importance of the spiritual nature of man, which is a reality beyond the human mind.

JP wanted to clarify that by rejecting materialism only can man realize his own true nature and fulfill the purpose of his being. According to Sebasti L. Raj - "As a matter of fact JP could not find much time to develop his ideas about the transcendental reality and when JP says that man is the measure of all things, he does not reject the transcendental reality like the materialist humanists or atheists."36

However, JP was not quite clear about the nature of this reality as Sebasti L. Raj observes. But he was convinced that modern sciences, particularly modern psychology, point out to a reality beyond the human mind, a reality that is definitely of a higher order than the mind. Moreover, he also points out that India has a long tradition of spirituality, therefore it would be self-deception to ignore or shut one's eyes to the experiences of a long tradition of spirituality and spiritual
seekers. JP makes a distinction between ordinary man and ascetics. “For the vast majority of people a full material satisfaction, understood in the right sense, is itself a spiritual life while a craving for wealth and the use of wrong means to amass it are anti-spiritual. However, to an ascetic who makes his spiritual life his profession itself, the demands of a spiritual life would be different.”

Though JP does not fully and clearly accept God or a supernatural reality yet he emphasized the need for man to go beyond the material reality. In his words, “Non-materialism ...by rejecting matter as the ultimate reality immediately elevates the individual to a moral plane, and urges him, without reference to any objective outside of himself, to endeavour to realize his own true nature and fulfil the purpose of his being... Only when materialism is transcended does individual man come into his own and become an end in himself.”

JP believe that there is a spiritual dimension in man and at least implicitly he acknowledges a transcendental reality or God. He said that human reason is not sufficient to explain and justify human life. Throughout his life he has been championing morality, but morality can not find its ultimate explanation without bringing in the spiritual nature of man and the existence of a transcendental reality.

2.6 CONCLUSION

In ‘Towards a New Society,’ JP writes, “Man is ever progressing towards the truth, for he is by nature an enquiring being. He will never be able to reach the ultimate truth, but by gradually eliminating untruth he will be able slowly to approach the truth.” According to JP, these potentialities and tendencies are not the prerogative of a select few but belong to the masses too, i.e., all human beings
including the masses are capable of moving towards the betterment of their life. From this, it can be assumed that, this is a very positive approach of JP regarding the potentiality of the human person.

JP was of the view that man is a product of both nature and culture. "For his genuine growth, therefore, man has to necessarily blend these two harmoniously." When man is unable to blend the two, there is tension and he lapses into barbarity. Various types of wars are examples of this barbarity. But JP is optimistic about man and his capabilities and believes that man has reached his adulthood and is in a position to shape his own future. He is not "a helpless victim of fate or the so-called forces of history, Man is endowed with reason and intelligence and he can order his life as he likes." Throughout his activities of life, it can be noticed that, JP had great respect for man and placed man at the center of everything. He believes that every human being is essentially good and honest and peace loving and he can cultivate his goodness through training, a value system, and this is the very foundation of his socio-political philosophy. His proposal for a system of people’s committee is based on the assumption that people are self less and sincere and are basically good and honest. This faith in the goodness of man leads him to create a new society. However, he admits that man is not born with goodness, "but becomes so by training."

It may not be out of context to mention here that Gandhi also believed that man had in him a mixture of good and evil. But basically man’s nature is not wicked and it was possible to arouse goodness in even the worst of persons. He said that, "There are chords in every human heart. If we only know how to strike the right chord, we bring out the music." According to Gandhi, man’s destined
purpose is to overcome the evil in him. Dennis Dalton writes, "Jay Prakash Narayan (JP) begins like all anarchists with a theory of human nature, as benign: capacities for destructive behaviour obviously exist but if motives of compassion and non-violence creativity and co-operation are cultivated and reinforced by society, then people can unquestionably realize the essential spirit of goodness that lies within them. With the proper example and education to encourage them, individuals will choose to follow 'goodmen' and noble efforts."44

From the study of the foundation of JP's socio-political philosophy, it can be assumed that man is the measure of all things. Hence any organization or institution should keep man in the center (Central Place). Then only the individual can grow up. It is the growth of the individual, which should be the motive of an institution. Organisation and institutions are only means to this goal i.e., the growth of the human person. "Only when man is recognized as the center of all things and is assigned his legitimate rights and privileges as a free and equal and self-determining person,"45 progress of mankind can be achieved in the real sense of the term. And this requires a radical change in social structures and social relationships. But, this will be possible if man's moral sense is aroused. The individual should keep in mind his physical as well as spiritual aspects, the sense of morality and the inner orientation towards the transcendental reality. Hence any study of man should include the spiritual, moral and the transcendental dimensions of man. Otherwise the study will be a partial one.

The man centered philosophy of Jay Prakash Narayan includes all the essential dimensions, already mentioned. His men-centred philosophy seems to be most appealing to the people and relevant in todays society. It may be said that the
major problems of the present day human society to some extent can be solved with JP’s ideas about the role of man towards society as well as societies obligation to man. Some may disagree with all his ideas about man, but it seems that J.P. has a very optimistic view about man and his capabilities. He believes that man is the monarch of his own future. He is not a helpless victim of fate or the forces of history. Man has reason and intelligence. He can mould his life as he likes.

Again JP has great respect for man. According to him every human being is good, honest and peace loving. His proposal for the establishment of peoples committee is based on his ideas that, people are selfless and sincere and are basically good and honest. This faith in goodness of man prompts him to create or think for a new society.

But JP’s concept of good man is criticized. His view implies that man is all good and there is no bad things in him. It seems that some thing is missing in his analysis of the human person. We can cite the examples of Thomas Hobbes and Machiavelli, who considered man as totally selfish. But JP seems to consider man as totally good. If his concept of man is accepted, then it will be very much difficult to explain the evil actions of man. It is equally true that all men are not selfish, dishonest or unjust all the time. But all men are selfish at least sometimes. Again there will always be some men who behave selfishly, dishonestly or unjustly. Hence JP’s concept of good man can be criticized as too simple and innocent which is far away from real world. In fact, in his lifetime he was often cheated by his associates who exploited his innocence. One should be realistic enough to recognize the selfish dishonest and exploitative tendencies in man and
make provisions against such a situation in society. But JP commits mistake in understanding human nature to be good alone. By taking into consideration the selfish, dishonest and ruthless nature of man, provisions should be made to build up a somewhat good society, where there is scope for further rectification in character building. Such a realistic approach alone will solve the problems of a decaying society.

JP has seen before his eyes, how men are growing selfish, corrupted, ruthless. But he was mistaken. He wanted to build an ideal society with these selfish people. However JP admits that good man is not born, but becomes so by training. Hence he insists on moral development of man. He expects every person to grow to his moral stature and build up moral values and behaviour patterns for himself. He was optimistic enough that man would be good if adhere to some moral principles. He tried to solve this problem through the media of a Sarvodaya Society.

In the introduction of 'From Socialism to Sarvodaya,' Vinoba Bhave writes, "I have been impressed by Jay Prakashji's numerous qualities ever since I came to know him. What attracts me most is the simplicity of his heart. This simplicity often caused considerable misunderstandings about him. Sometimes he may also commit errors on account of it..." 46

Even then, we can say that his man centred approach is philosophically unquestionable and it can be the ground for constructing a real and true social, economic, political and moral philosophy.
References


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.


10. Devi, Dr. Pranita (2003). Vivekananda’s Philosophy of Man, Manik Prakash, Guwahati, Quoted from P.T. Raju (ed.) The Concept of Man, p.70.


27. Ibid, p.244.


