CHAPTER 5

DEVELOPMENT
Democracy is the venture of a true seeker of freedom and a just social order in which moral and spiritual potentialities of all men are equally directed to the perfection of that which is distinctly human. It is an ideal for men entrusted with freedom—constantly to be striven for so that the ideal may thus become a veritable-reality. As such deliberations on liberty are of direct relevance to the ideal of democracy which is a direct means for realizing such a perfectibility of mankind through a free and just social order. Mill asserts that for a true liberal society to come into existence the foundation must be laid by a careful programme of social and political action.

Although Mill is a great liberal thinker and opposed to the tyrannical power of the state, yet he fully recognizes the importance and indispensability of the state in achieving the moral and spiritual well-being of citizens. According to him the power that a state exercises over its people should not be despotic in nature, so as to kill the individuality and freedom of its citizens. Government is essential for getting things done in an orderly way and it is indispensable for realizing and maximizing the happiness of the individual.
Since, the end of the government is the greatest happiness of the greatest number, according to Mill, government cannot be regarded as an end in itself but only as a means to an end. He regards government as an 'artificial' means to achieve the end of utility. The word artificial implies that all political institutions are especially framed to serve human ends and purposes. They are the outgrowth of experience and rational deliberation. All policies of government should be framed in accordance with the principle of utility. Mill in trying to strengthen the democratic forces, suggests that in order to attain the end of happiness, government should not only see that there are conditions of freedom but also create such an atmosphere as would enable people to realize their human excellence.

Mill contends that the best form of government is a democratic government, which maximizes true knowledge, rational belief, self-education, self-direction, moral character and responsibility, happiness and progress. It is part of the function of a good government to restrain people from thoughtless errors while making major decisions of their lives and enable them to pass moral judgements by non-coercive methods such as education and participation.

According to Mill the meaning of the term democracy
leaves ample room for disregarding the conditions under which people can really be said to rule themselves. Mill asserts that the meaning of democracy should not be confused with its denotation, because, if the political systems denoted as democracies themselves constituted the meaning of democracy, no future or postulated political system could be called a democracy without changing the meaning of democracy, and this is absurd. The meaning of the term is determined by the essential characteristics it connotes which are possessed by all political systems denoted by the term democracy.

The confusion regarding the definition of a term arises mainly because it has a favourable connotation. The word democracy is a term of strong approvable and has acquired emotive content to such an extent that it has become good tactics to apply it to one's own favoured system. But to uphold a true meaning of democracy we must look into its meaning as an integrated whole i.e. its descriptive as well as emotive content. It is not meant to imply that a clear cut definition of democracy can be given and there can be no disagreement regarding its meaning and definition; the dispute however, arises regarding the exact position of its boundaries.

The etymological meaning of the term democracy is government by the people or rule by the people or
self government. It refers to such a constitutional arrangement in which people themselves are the governors, but what precisely is meant by people? The concept of people is also liable to numerous interpretations. This refers to the problem: what proportion of individuals composing a society are included in the meaning of people?

According to Mill, the meaning of people should include the whole adult population, only then will it represent true democratic thought. No political systems can be called democracies if they exclude the poor or the rich or women or slaves. What we mean by people is not the largest class but all the citizens. Mill writes:

"The pure idea of democracy, ..., is the government of the whole people by the whole people, equally represented."6

However, there is widespread agreement in excluding children, the insane and criminals on sufficient grounds from the meaning of people for they are unfit for participating in the affairs of the state.

At times the concept of 'people' has been interpreted to mean the 'many' or the proletariat. Aristotle, for example, defines democracy as the rule of the many. It may be thought that 'many' refers to the whole people but this is not so. He writes:

"A democracy exists whenever those who are free and are not well-off, being in the majority, are in control of government."8
Aristotle’s idea is later revived in the thought of Marx who defines democracy as the dictatorship of the proletariat. For them democracy means democracy of the poor and not of the rich. But this is not what is meant by ‘people’ because if we accept the view that the term people can be interpreted differently, it would mean that many systems can be called democracies, in spite of being very different from each other.

There is a distinction between the rule of many or the rule of the largest class and the rule of all. This distinction is important and cannot be overlooked i.e. if a constitution gives power to the whole people, in practice it may lead to the rule of the largest class or sometimes the largest class itself may be divided on many questions and issues. But we shall see that however large majority it may be, it should not be given the sole power. Mill is right in maintaining that any government which excludes a part of society or a class or a group of individuals cannot be regarded as a true democracy. The idea of the rule of the proletariat or the poor does not represent the true meaning of the term ‘people’. It refers only to a part of its denotation.

If the meaning of the term ‘people’ refers to the entire adult population, then in what way can they rule themselves? In order to deal with this question we
must know the meaning of 'to rule'. 'To rule' is generally to prescribe conduct for some one. The rule of the people implies that they are not governed by outsiders or monarchs etc. All individuals comprising a society themselves participate in forming public policies. If people can directly participate in taking political decisions, they can be said to rule themselves. Such an idea is found in the Athenian concept of democracy, where people directly participated in the affairs of the state.

But can we have a direct form of democracy? Mill asserts that in the ancient world it was possible to have direct form of democratic government because at that time there did not exist the physical conditions for the formation and propagation of public opinion. But in the modern world face to face participation is not possible, for the size of population has increased to a considerable extent and the nature of political problems requires specialized knowledge. To govern people in the sense of a direct democracy therefore may be Utopian and impracticable.

Mill proclaims that the system of representation gives us the solution to both practical and speculative difficulties of direct democracy. Mill contends that the idea of representation implies that people do not
rule themselves in their own person but they themselves choose their representatives and decide who is to rule them and thus 'people' and 'government' are not identical. But the question is: what kind of relationship exists between the people and the representatives? A representative is an ambassador who promotes the interests of the people.

A democratic government in this sense is a represented or delegated democracy. The representatives chosen by people act as a mediating link between the government and the people. Thus, according to Mill, the sovereignty of people which is the essence of democracy, is located in representative democracy. The practical supremacy, according to him, resides in the representatives of people. He claims that:

"...government must be performed by few, for the benefit of many, and the security of the many consists in being governed by those who possess the largest share of their confidence, and no longer than while that confidence lasts." (Italics mine)

The political issues, questions and problems are not decided by people but by the few elected for the work.

Thus, we can say that in such a representative democracy the role of the people is not to govern themselves but to choose the ideal governor to determine
the general direction of political decision making. If this is so, we are confronted with a problem i.e. should the representatives be bound by the instructions of their constituents or should they act according to their own wisdom? If a representative is like an ambassador to his people, does it mean that he should consult his constituents on every issue? Should he act keeping in view the opinions of others rather than according to his own conscience? Mill contends that a representative should be assigned an independent role and therefore, should act according to his own conscience, ability and judgement. He should not be committed to any particular interests whether his own, or those of any particular group or class. He should weigh the opinions of all impartially in order to serve the ideal of utility.

It is commonly argued that sometimes a representative may act taking into account his future election. He may merely act as an instrument of people knowing that the constituents may refuse to elect him in the next election, if he failed to pledge himself to their wishes and opinion. It is further pointed out that if the representatives are assigned an independent role, they may act in furtherance of their own interests. The problem is that government is composed of individuals that are representatives of people and representatives like all individuals may pursue their own private interests.
Mill recognizes this difficulty and asserts that one of the greatest dangers of democracy lies in the sinister interests of the representatives. As such the interests of the rulers may conflict with the interests of people. It is possible, he says, that the ruling class may be under the influence of some class interest which may induce them to act in a way which may be opposed to impartial concern for the interests of all citizens. Mill asserts that individuals have both selfish and unselfish interests, immediate and remote interests and they generally act according to their immediate and apparent interests and not according to their real interests. Both selfish and unselfish feelings of men are directly related to the possession of power. He writes:

"The moment a man, or a class of men, find themselves with power in their hands, the man's individual interest, or the class's separate interest, acquires an entirely new degree of importance in their eyes. Finding themselves worshipped by others, they become worshippers of themselves..."¹⁴

He says that it is universally experienced fact that power corrupts men. This danger of democracy grows out from the very advantage it offers i.e. in this form of government all men are free to pursue their own interests.

But the problem is how to provide protection against this evil? The desirable object, according to
Mill, would be that any number of persons who have sinister interests should not be allowed to exercise a preponderant influence in government. Since the modern society is pluralistic and individuals are diverse the interests of individuals may differ from each other but the government should be so constituted that no sectional interests should be allowed to preponderate against justice or truth. Thus, a government can be a real and true democracy only if it is representative of the will of the whole people and not of a part of the population. Thus in a democracy we are faced not only with the problem of the sinister interests of representatives but also with the problem that the interests of people may conflict with each other, or with the utility principle. The problem of today's democracy is not only to bring harmony between individual interests but also between powerful classes and organized interests. A society consists of a vast variety of individuals having different social, political and economic backgrounds. In contemporary industrial and technological age, a society is a pluralistically organized body politic which is characterized by the free initiatives of the mutual tensions between particular groups, working communities, co-operative agencies, unions, associations, federated bodies of producers and consumers, rising in tiers. All these should be duly recognized by the state.
All says that the balance of interests or harmony of interests can be secured, if intelligent or wise representatives are elected and it is because of their well informed minds and wisdom that they would be able to discern the true interests of their country and thus would serve the general interest. And it is a democratic society being a free society which recognizes equal rights of all individuals to pursue their ends.

All insists that it is very important that the institutions of a country should stamp the opinions of wise persons. Hence people should choose only those who exhibit ability by proving themselves good statesmen; who possess knowledge about issues and are able to discuss public affairs. In such a government public views are not directly expressed and implemented by people but by the refined elite chosen by the citizens. It is the wisdom of the chosen few that can express the true interests of the people. If people are sensible enough they would be able to recognize the value of superior wisdom and once the value of knowledge is realized, men will choose their representatives as they choose their physician. All says in this context:

"No man pretends to instruct his physician nor expects a pledge from him that he shall prescribe for him a practical treatment."
Mill pins his faith on the ability of the masses to choose wise representatives. He holds that ordinary people cannot even know fully their own interests and wise representatives can know people's interests better if they are sensitive and aware of the opinions and feelings of people. It is for this reason that he assigns an independent role to the representatives. The only interest which should prevail in a democracy is the general interest.

Thus, democracy is the best form of government because it is the social extension of morality. Morality begins with conflicting interests and seeks to establish harmonious interests. The conflicting interests of the individual and the society may give rise to a moral problem which could be solved by creating a harmony between them.

Mill asserts that unless people express social cohesion in terms of the identification of their own interests with the general interest, a society is not ripe for democracy. Representatives and people should understand that their selfish interests are inseparable from the general interests and they can secure their individual interests only through socially extended morality. A democratic government should be founded on independent autonomous individuals acting in co-operation with others.
As such Mill's practical solution to the problem of reconciliation of wills in terms of representative government seems to be realistic. His approach is oriented towards political reality and he defines good government in conformity with his liberal ideals. The harmony of interests is based on certain psychological conditions in the individual and social climate. Unless a certain amount of disinterested feeling for others is there among both the ruled and the rulers, we cannot create harmony between different interests.

He feels that the autonomy of an individual is compatible with a just and effective democratic government. For him, if a person is completely selfish and incapable of identifying his interests with the general interests, he would be incapable of participating effectively in a good government. But the identification of one's own interests with that of the community does not imply that one should sacrifice his individuality. Originality, spontaneity, and other traits of individuality can co-exist if there is harmony between the various interests. It implies that one should learn to give equal recognition to the interests of others.

Mill holds that conflicting problems and issues can be settled by means of persuasion, discussion, negotiation etc. All conflicts should be resolved
from the point of view of an impartial spectator keeping in view the common interests of the people. Mill rightly asserts that a representative form of government cannot be successful if it identifies itself with any particular interest. If the representatives keep this in mind, then it would make little difference as to who is elected. Even if the representatives belong to different parties, they should base their decisions on the principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number and not on sectional interests. In fact, it is by creating a harmony between diverse interests that we achieve the aim of utility. Mill rightly observes:

"Identification of interest between the rulers and the ruled, being therefore, in a literal sense, impossible to be realized, ought not to be spoken of as a condition which a government must absolutely fulfill; but as an end to be incessantly aimed at, and approximated to as nearly as circumstances render possible, and as is compatible with the regard due to other ends."

(italics mine)

The moral basis of democracy is rooted in the assumption that the interests of all should be recognized for all have access to truth. It is quite possible that any individual's claim may be true; besides, each individual has a unique experience through which truth is accessible to him alone. Since democracy recognizes diversity, it also allows different kinds of creeds to
coexist within it. In a pluralistic society many ideals, and values are cherished and conflict between different ideals and different interests is welcome. In this context, Kelson asserts that no absolute values should be accepted in a democracy for the acceptance of fixed and absolute ideals would destroy the value and meaning of freedom of thought and expression. We cannot claim infallibility regarding what is right and true. It is true that norms and values should not be considered as laws. The laws of morals, as Mill maintains, cannot be deduced from the law of logic because they cannot be determined by any scientific method. The only way to attain authentic values and ideals is by means of their critical examination with the help of free and open discussion.

Democracy may be criticized for tolerating diversity of interests and ideals. Many countries try to adhere to well-defined creeds. For example, according to Marxists the very existence of a variety of interests in a society makes democracy a sham. They insist that government must be committed to only one set of interests i.e., of the working class. The rule of the proletariat will help in establishing a society without conflict of interests. Marxian theory is based on the faith that capitalists alone have special interests and the interests
of the proletariat class are identical with those of all the rest of the people.

Can we really conceive any society which is free from any conflict of interests? In real life there is no community in which there is no diversity of interests and ideals and when the socialists assert that the so-called will of the proletariat is the will of, say, the Soviet people, they are merely overlooking the conflicting interests. By ignoring this diversity it tends to become more like an authoritarian regime.

Mill who was sensitive to the grievances and problems of the labouring class, insists that their interests should be recognized for if their sufferings and grievances continued, he felt they might prove a great hindrance to happiness and cause loss of human dignity, but at the same time the interests of other classes should not be overlooked. Mill would say that the will of the proletariat cannot express the will of the whole people, it includes the will of the bourgeois class as well. By ignoring the interests of any particular class or a group we are abandoning one of the greatest advantages which democracy holds over the authoritarian state. The exponents of democracy are not committed to any particular faith or doctrine. The reasonable man never has faith but takes into consideration all the
probabilities and is well prepared to change his mind if the new considerations appeal more to him. Thus the criticism offered by Marxists is not well grounded and therefore cannot be accepted.

But it may be argued that all rulers justify their actions and policies by arguing that they are in conformity with the interests of people. For example, Plato considers monarchy as the best form of government for realizing the common good. He argues that because the power is in the hands of one person he will perform his functions virtuously and intelligently for he will feel himself responsible for all his actions and decisions. Mill regards this as a radical and most pernicious misconception of good government. He says this view implies that a monarch will always and at all times be well equipped with correct information regarding the functions of every branch of administration in every part of the country. This requires extraordinary qualities of intelligence and ability to perform all functions pertaining to all departments. Even if such a despot is found who performs all the functions efficiently, people will have no voice in the administration of their country.

Mill argues that even if there is a despot who allows freedom of the press, opinion and discussion on public issues, public opinion will be either in his
flexible concept. Different people give different interpretations regarding its meaning. Mill writes:

"Not thews and sinews; otherwise pure democracy would be the only form of polity that could exist. To mere muscular strength, add two other elements, property and intelligence, and we are nearer the truth, but far from having reached it." 27

It may be pointed out that sometimes a majority is dominated by a minority forcibly even if the majority has a preponderance in property and intelligence. Mill says that various elements of power can be politically influential only when all are properly organized and the advantage in organization lies in the hands of those people who form the government. Mill writes in this context:

"The power in society which has any tendency to convert itself into political power is not power quiescent, power merely passive, but active power; in other words, power actually exerted; that is to say, a very small portion of all the power in existence. Politically speaking a great part of all power consists in will. How is it possible, then to compute the elements of political power, while we omit from the computation anything which acts on the will." 28

and further speaking on the significance of opinion he says: "... that opinion is itself one of the greatest active social forces."29

Mill rightly claims that power is exercised not only through political sources but also by social forces.
A person who has a certain belief is social power as compared to those who have only interests. He says that people who can persuade others on the basis of rational choice to think, for example, that a certain form of government is better and is therefore preferable, have already taken an important step in tilting the powers of society on their side. Economic and physical powers are not the only elements of power. Negro slavery is put on end to by influencing the minds of people with the help of moral convictions and not by any change in the distribution of material interests. Mill holds:

"It is what men think that determines how they act; and though the persuasions and convictions of average men are in much greater degree determined by their personal position than by reason, no little power is exercised over them by the persuasions and convictions of those whose personal position is different, and by the united authority of the instructed." 31

(Italics mine)

When the instructed minds are persuaded to recognize one political institution as good and the other as bad a great deal has been done by social preponderance to enable a particular political system to subsist. Therefore, it becomes obvious that social forces help in shaping out the form of a government in a country. He contends:

"... the maxim, that the government of a country is what the social forces in existence compel
Power is often regarded as a relational concept for it is always exercised over others. Macpherson, for example, writes:

"Power is a relationship in which one person or group is able to determine the actions of another in the direction of the former's own ends... (power) is present in the extent to which one person controls by sanctions the decisions and actions of another." 33

A similar idea is expressed by Dahl who says that power is a kind of coercive influence which forces others to act in a way they would not otherwise act. It is the ability to make decisions regarding the behaviour of others. But can we define power in terms of coercive influence? Influence is a more general term than power, e.g. a father may have a great influence over his child but this kind of influence cannot be regarded as an instance of power. Similarly a writer may influence the thoughts of people to a great extent; still it is not identical with power because it is only one element of power. There are other constituents of power as well, as is maintained by Gill. In this context, Stanley L. Benn writes:
"To possess power or to be powerful is, then, to have a generalized potentiality for getting one's own way or bringing about changes (at least some of which are intended) in other people's actions or conditions."\(^3^4\)

If power is a relation and always exercised over others then does it require physical force or a minimum of acquiescence or cooperation? Is power always exercised to achieve the intended results? Can it not be exercised over others in ignorance? Sometimes a person may lead others to act according to his own wishes merely by suggestion. Sometimes persuasion may enable a person to exercise influence over others. But offering good reasons for doing a certain thing is not to exercise power over others. Still the effect of persuasion to influence the decisions of others cannot be ignored.\(^3^5\)

A threat of real harm may also enable a person to exercise power over others. Power in all these senses is a relative concept. This analysis shows that if power is to be exercised, the acquiescence or the cooperation of people is necessary. Physical force alone or material force alone or social influence alone or intelligence alone is not enough. Power can be influential if all elements are co-ordinated. Apart from this, the consent of the people over whom it is to be exercised, is also necessary. If power is always exercised over others how can it be morally justified? The use of coercion or power by the state can be justified if it is in the
People express their choice and exercise their controlling power through elections.

The extension of suffrage is an important way to control the problem of power in a society. Mill asserts that if a person has no right to vote, he is discontented and will feel that he has no share in the management of the affairs of society. He becomes merely an observer and onlooker who has to obey laws and has no right to vote for the person of his choice. Therefore, no person should be excluded from the process of voting unless it is to prevent some greater evil. The privilege to elect their own representatives should be open to all. No arrangement of suffrage can be convincing and justified if all are not entitled to vote; for this is the only way through which people can control the affairs of the State. Universal suffrage is an important means, according to Mill, to achieve the end of utility and therefore it should not be so designed as to give and limit power only to a few but it must enable the government to represent the whole community in the truest possible sense. It is not an absolute or natural right but each should be given the right on utilitarian grounds.

Mill advocates that even women should be given equal rights for they have the same interest in good government as men have. The welfare of all, whether
of men or women is equally affected by it. Women too have equal need to secure their share of benefits. Since women are physically weaker, they are more dependent on law and society for their protection. Therefore, they should be given the right to express their choice. Mill asks: if women can think, read, write and take up occupations like men, then on what grounds can we disqualify or deprive them of their right to vote? He says that women have shown fitness for the highest social functions in proportion as they have been admitted to them. Men and women equally need this right not to govern themselves but in order to protect themselves from being misgoverned. Differentiation based on sex, race and colour is artificial and owes its origin in socio-economic factors.

Mill asserts that franchise should be extended to the working class as well. He cautions that if the constitution fails to give voting right to them, it could not be a real democracy. The extension of suffrage to the working class would entitle a democratic set-up to realize the principle of utility. He writes:

"This gain does not consist in turning the propertied class out of government... but in compelling the propertied classes to carry it on in a manner which they shall be capable of justifying to the unpropertied."

However, this is only one advantage out of many. Mill pleads that it also helps us in solving the problem of
conflict between the propertied and the working class.

If all individuals had the same preference there would be no problem because their collective decisions would be the sum of individual decisions. But this is not the case because unanimity regarding decisions is rarely found and hence there arises a problem. In the absence of unanimous opinion how can representatives represent the whole people? If the opinions are divided it is commonly said that minority must surrender to the majority. Both Bentham and James Mill regard the majority rule as the best form of all possible governments. The larger the majority, the nearer is it to the concept of whole people.

The rule of the majority appeals at first sight, but does it express the will of the whole people? Mill rightly rejects the rule of the majority and says that it does not reflect the true interests of people. Sometimes a majority may represent a particular interest group which may have definite aims that conflict with the aims and objectives of minorities. Both the majority and the minority should have a say in the government for this would result in better legislation.

As such if the majority becomes more powerful and less recognition is given to minorities then it poses a real threat to the freedom of minorities. This
problem has drawn the attention of many thinkers. If the minorities yield to the majority, it would seem that it is the majority that rules the minority. From the point of view of the individual, it hardly makes any difference whether he is oppressed by a despot or by a majority. In both cases he is subject to the tyrannical power of others. In the case of despotism an individual can at least look to others for help, for all find themselves in the same predicament but in the case of majority rule his position is miserable he has no escape and he develops a sense of loneliness and alienation. Majority rule leads to the political alienation of the individual as well as the alienation of the minority groups.

The question is: what can be done to meet the problems of majority rule? Mill's position is clear when he says that the greatest function of the government is to prevent the strongest from becoming the only power. Democracy cannot be the best form of government unless the weaker side is strengthened. All harmful tendencies which may be associated with any form of government should be prevented. He contends that if the majority succeeds in suppressing minorities or bending these towards itself, then it is a sign and indication that an improvement in such a country will cease and
... on a number of factors. All these factors cannot be found in one single power of a community. A society can progress when there is a variety of conflicting and rival powers.

Thus Mill rightly claims that in a true and ideal democracy both the majority and the minority, the common and the uncommon should have their representatives. The interests and opinions of the outnumbered should also be heard. No particular class, not even the majority should be allowed to legislate and administer in terms of its class interests. In this context Robson agreeing with Mill writes:

"All shades of opinion in the country should be able to find spokesmen in parliament, and all public issues should be discussed fully and from all points of view. These functions a numerous assembly is partially qualified to perform."45

Like Mill he believes that the government of majority is only an approximation to the ideal of democracy, and it is liable to the evils of class government. Robson further contends that true democracy is equal and impartial and the government of all.

To overcome the problem of tyranny of the majority, Mill indicates a solution. He says whatever at first seemed to be the inherent defect of a democratic form of
government (i.e. giving power to the majority) can be cured by Mr. Thomas Hare's scheme which gives power to a party in proportion to its numbers. According to Hare's scheme, candidates need not stand from any particular constituency and people can cast their votes for any candidate, who may be selected from the whole country. A certain minimum number of votes may be fixed for each candidate and if he does not get the minimum votes he cannot be elected. Once the candidate gets sufficient votes to ensure his election no more votes are counted in his favour and therefore, unnecessary votes are in Hare's opinion disenfranchised. This method also makes provision for preferential voting i.e., an elector can give his first preference, second preference etc.

Under this system of voting a minority, no matter how scattered, can elect a candidate representing their opinions provided their voting number constitute a number equal to the number of the eligible votes divided by the number of seats in parliament. The other important effect of this system is that it makes provision for the inclusion of a large number of inter-dependent parties in parliament in such a way that the "... legislature then, instead of being made up of men who simply represent the creed of great political or religious parties, will
comprise a large proportion of the most eminent individual minds in the country placed there without reference to party by voters who appropriate their individual eminence. Then the submission to a party decreases, the worth of the representatives will increase and parliament will represent the true interests of the nation.

Mill opines that to some people this system of voting may appear to be impracticable but actually it is not so. It is a simple and valid means to achieve the end of happiness in a society. Those who regard this system as impracticable have not fully examined it. A nation does not seem to them to consist of persons but of artificial units, the creation of geography and statistics. Parliament must represent towns and counties and not human beings. And towns are represented when they have their own representatives living there who can fully understand their feelings and social problems.

Hare's scheme of voting appeals to Mill and he writes to Hare:

"You appear to me to have exactly, and for the first time, solved the difficulty of popular representation — and by doing so, to have raised up the cloud of gloom and uncertainty which hung over the futurity of representative government and therefore of civilization."

Thus, tyranny of majority or 'virtual blotting of minority' is not a natural consequence of democracy.
He says that here's scheme would raise the intellectual standard of the government for it enables representation of minorities.

Mill's greatest merit, lies in his defence of the rights of minorities. Although an exact balance in any society is impossible, still proportional representation alone can give a voice to all significant minorities and majorities. Proportional representation means that a minority of electors have a minority of representatives and a majority of electors have a majority of representatives. Unless it is proportional representation it is not a just and equal government, but a government of the privileged over the rest. Representation should be distributed in proportion to population.

In this context, Tocqueville asserts that tyranny of the majority is inherent in the system of democracy and it results in the system of conformity because people feel insecure before the power of the majority. Individuals feel weak before the power of society and public opinion. The result is an almost irresistible fear of opposing the opinion of the majority. Commenting on Tocqueville, Cowett says:

"Thus, for Tocqueville, conformity rises out of the very nature of democratic culture.... This tyranny would be total because of the power of the majority to enslave the spirit as well as the body."52
Jill was very much disturbed at de Tocqueville's insistence on the possible tyranny of the majority inherent in the system of democracy. Tocqueville is emphatic that a centralized government fails to achieve its object if the distances are enormous. There was evidence of a general political apathy in the America of his own time. In horror does Jill exclaim that while the general political apathy does not tyrannize, it does weaken and kill the initiative of people to such an extent that a nation turns out to be like a flock of animals with the government as its shepherded. He adds that no one will ever believe that a wise and liberal government can emerge from the votes cast by a subservient and submissive people.

but is conformity really inherent in the system of democracy? The problem of conformity is more acute today than it was in the time of Tocqueville. The contemporary sociological thinkers contend that conformity is the outcome of a number of factors such as status, anxiety and fear of majority. Marxists also claim that individuals are not free to express their opinions for they are alienated from their own selves. In an industrial and technological society individuals work like a machine under dehumanizing working conditions. Under such conditions people have little or no interest in expressing their opinions because they are alienated to such an
extent that they are unable to take any decision on public issues and consequently accept whatever policies are framed. On these grounds the success of democracy is questioned and very much doubted.

If the existing conditions of a modern society have resulted in conformity and alienation of individuals, does it imply that the representative system is bad in itself? Mill fears the tendency of the masses to discourage the uncommon line of thought and action which he thinks must be offset by some other power in society. He thinks that they may force these uncommon men to conform to their standards. In Mill's time though the effects of mass democracy were only just beginning to be felt in that country, the pressure for social conformity was already much in evidence...54

Mill was alarmed by the growing tendency of people to have a stereotyped style of lives. Nevertheless Mill is optimistic in his outlook and he thinks that the danger pointed out by Tocqueville is not a permanent feature of democracy but only a passing one. He fears that if dull majority comes to dominate in the matters of opinion and taste it would consequently kill originality. He felt that the masses, in their lazy and unthinking devotion to familiar ways, were "in danger of drying up the vital sources of all truly progressive achievements."55
Mill, however, is more concerned with intellectual freedom. In spite of his fear regarding the tendency of the masses to conform to certain standards, he would disagree with the Marxists and Tocqueville on this point. He contends that conformity is not an inevitable consequence of the system itself. If people are afraid to express their opinions freely and are alienated to such an extent that they believe in conformity, then that society is not yet ripe for a representative form of government. In such a society great harm is done to those who are afraid of expressing their heretical opinions. Their mutual development and reasoning power are adversely affected and such people freely choose to obey and accept the norms which will provide comfortable existence for them. Here, Martineau agrees with Mill and says that tyranny of the majority is not inherent in the democratic system. She writes:

"To declare a coincidence of opinion with the supposed majority arose not from the fear of the majority or the insecurity of individual status, but from the desire for individual or group advantage. The politician creates an atmosphere of conformity by denying, concealing or asserting anything which it is supposed will please... the majority." 36

She says although people have equal right and freedom of opinion, they remain quiet and passive and consequently, if at all they are roused they act at the last moment.
However, it may be pointed out that the elected few who are responsible for the decision making process are sometimes in a position to tyrannize over the majority that they represent. In this context Mill rightly points out that:

"No government by a democracy or a numerous aristocracy, either in its political acts or in the opinions, qualities and tone of mind which it fosters, ever did or could rise above mediocrity, except in so far as the sovereigns may have let themselves be guided ... by the counsels and influence of a more highly gifted and instructed One or Few." 57

Mill being aware of this crucial situation rightly fears that such a condition is bound to affect the individuality and growth of the people. It was the existing morality of the middle class which disturbed Mill more deeply than the possible tyranny of the working classes. Therefore, he appeals for the relaxation of the morals of middle class and emphasizes the need of individual development.

The tyranny of majority does not operate through the acts of public authorities alone but there is another form of this tyranny because the majority consists of mediocres and they may act as a mass and not as real and free individuals. They may express their opinion by voting thoughtlessly and without knowing the value of this right to vote. In doing so they may pose a real
threat to the minority of uncommon men. The people as a mass who attain the power to control government may impose its low level of tastes and may be unsympathetic to minorities. Earlier Plato who took majority to mean a mob believed mass decisions to be emotional and particularly so since no individual would feel himself responsible for any decision. The complex and controversial issues are beyond the understanding of a common man. The masses are moved by their emotions, likes and dislikes. Thus, according to Plato, no right decisions can come from them.

It is asserted that the ordinary man regards politics as nuisance, something with which he would rather have nothing to do. Masses discovered the strain of freedom, and many appeared who could not stand the stress of independent thinking and independent judgement and independent action. It is further pointed out that democracy is continually asking an ordinary man to decide upon problems which are quite outside his knowledge which he is, therefore, bound to decide on irrational grounds. Because of these reasons desirability of democracy is attacked. Studies of voting behaviour have shown that electors are mostly ignorant and uninterested in general political participation. It has been observed in a study of this nature that the well informed are
very few in number on the great majority of issues. The knowledge that most of the people have, rather than forming the basis for their voting decisions, serves to bolster preferences already formed and decisions already made. Electors are usually biased and voting has emotional significance for them. They do not seem to decide rationally, therefore, opinions expressed by them have little value. The fear of rule of the irrational mass of people has alarmed democrats very much.

The voting behaviour shows that the individuals are no longer autonomous but tied to some party. Parties shape the opinions of individuals and plan their programme and may provide very limited choice to the members. Moreover, parties usually represent particular interests and thus their demands may conflict with the general good. When a person identifies himself with a group, his group interests become more important than the common good of the whole community. Social welfare may seem to them less significant and less real. Individuals regard their party as a better means to express their views in government than the individual representatives. Parties are supposed to be a connecting link between the people and the government, and thus form part of the democratic process.
Sometimes, between parties and individuals there are a number of intermediary entities such as unions, associations of pressure groups. Like parties, all these entities influence public policy. These are organized groups but do not become part of government. Individuals who are poorly informed find it easy to express their opinions by linking themselves to parties.

Mill who is aware of these problems asserts that with the advance of civilization, power passes from individuals to masses, that the importance of the masses becomes constantly greater, that of individual less. Mill penetrates more deeply into this problem than any other thinker of his time. He admits that the masses can never rise above mediocrity. He was afraid of the selfishness and brutality of the masses but at the same time he was hopeful that a time would come when men would no longer fear these factors. Optimistically he contends that even if people acted as a mass they would not always be tyrannical. He asserts that the effect of environment and heredity on the character of individuals cannot be under-estimated or overlooked. And there is on the whole 'a preponderance among mankind of rational opinions and rational conduct'. Individuals may not be intellectuals or geniuses but they may not have developed their self fully in the absence of adequate opportunities.
According to Mill, although an individual has both an individual and a social self, yet he is mostly dominated by his social self. The individual self is developed if the pressures of society are not so overpowering.

In view of the foregoing position Andrew Hacker says that according to Mill, no one should be blamed for following the less noble path because of the existing conditions of the society. A person may have the potentiality for creative thought or artistic expression, but he may not have the courage to make sacrifices which might threaten the comfort of his and his family. Mill does not blame members of the majority who remain within the majority even though they have potentialities for a better life. The fact that there are men who might be uncommon and yet stay common is the responsibility of society and not of the individual.

It is true that such conditions exist in a modern society, but people are mostly guided by leaders. In most of the organizations it is the leaders who initiate actions. To overcome the difficulties, Mill suggests that men of genius should point out the way to the masses. But wise men should not be allowed to compel the masses to obey them for this will affect the freedom and mental development of the people. Even if the masses are unable to understand the details of public issues they can know
the general nature of issues as Aristotle too thinks that a majority decision is likely to be right if all are free to contribute their opinions which are further open to public scrutiny and criticism. This shows that the majority need not always be wrong and it may also have capabilities and potentialities of uncommon life and they may be capable of developing themselves.

For Mill, therefore, intelligent and moral leadership is important. But the problem is how to attain this in a society where people are mostly ignorant and hardly average? Mill contends that the difficulty in politics will for a long time be how best to conciliate the two great elements on which good government depends; to combine the greatest amount of the advantage derived from the independent judgement of the instructed Few, with the greatest degree of the security for rectitude of purpose derived from rendering those Few responsible to the Many.63

Another problem that arises is: if the masses cannot rise above mediocrity, then it is possible that people may choose inefficient representatives with a low level of intelligence. In such a case universal enfranchisement will establish the dictatorship of power which will be blind and deaf. But if this is so, then universal suffrage may prove harmful rather than be of
any advantage to the people. But Hobson argues that it is better to give power to those who make mistakes than to those who act according to their own sinister interests. Knowledge furthermore will correct the mistakes and their consequent evils by indicating where the true interests of the individual lie. 64

It is true that the incompetent elector may choose rulers who are incompetent like himself, which may further result in injustice. But whatever may be its defects democracy has at least certain checks and instruments which, if properly used, can rid men of their ignorance, apathy and mediocrity. Moreover, an average individual may not be so very ignorant as he may be supposed to be. It is true that unless the foundations of democracy are strongly established it may be endangered by potential threats.

Hill rightly contends that even under very good conditions we cannot rely on the mass of the electorate. As mentioned earlier his hope lies in the fact that if they choose representatives possessing more wisdom, greater ability and richer experience, the government can be successful. This idea is quite compatible with our definition of democracy for people themselves will choose wise representatives, and representatives will hold power for a limited period and they would be under
the supreme control of the people. People can appoint them and remove them according to their own will and free choice. Mill's plea for gradual extension of franchise, proportional representation, plural voting and competitive civil service examination is specially significant to aid people in obviating the potential difficulties of universal suffrage.

Mill suggests that franchise should be gradually extended without sacrificing the liberal principles. If a society is not ripe for a democratic government and people are not capable of sharing in the affairs of the state, then it does not necessarily mean that they should introduce universal suffrage immediately. In that situation it would be better to leave the responsibility in the hands of a few enlightened and experienced persons. And when the masses acquire the skill of participating, recognize the importance of their voting right and responsibilities they would form a free society of men prepared for self-government.

Mill contends that if the people are backward to manage their affairs, it is the duty of the government to train them and give them education. The masses cannot at once understand the complex problems of their nation as a whole. But local governments deal with simple matters and have fewer powers. He says that in educating
a mass electorate, the proper procedure is to start by allowing people to vote on local matters only. The skill and wisdom of the masses will be gradually developed through practical experience. Once skill and knowledge are acquired, they can be given freedom to participate in the national electorate. Gradual extension therefore according to Mill would help in achieving the true goal of democratic government.

Mill's principle of universal suffrage is not an absolute principle, it admits of certain exceptions. He restricts the right of voting on utilitarian grounds. He says the right to vote should be given to those who pay taxes. An individual who is dependent on others and is bankrupt and does not pay taxes for a long time should not be allowed to vote. A person in debt and unable to pay off his debt should also be disqualified from exercising his franchise. He further asserts that no person should participate in suffrage unless he has knowledge of the three R's. He must be able to read, write and perform simple operations of arithmetic.

Mill contends that universal teaching must precede universal enfranchisement. Electors must possess some knowledge of political divisions, general history, history and institutions of their country, and the means of acquiring elementary education should be available.
People should be capable of choosing their representative with an objective. They should be aware of the fact that there is a lot of power and value inherent in their vote. In order to make them understand their role better we must keep them well informed of the existing internal conditions of their country through the media of press. Means of communication are vital and these can help people to understand public issues. They should be made conscious of their duty and responsibility, otherwise representative institutions would be of little value.

It may further be pointed out that universal franchise may result in outnumbering the superior intellects and power may remain in the hands of common men. If power is in the hands of those people who are much below the highest level of intellectuals in a community, it may exhibit a very low standard of intelligence in political affairs and it would make democracy deficient. Therefore, Mill says that a balance should be created between the highly educated and the less educated by giving an additional weightage to the votes of highly instructed minds. Mill argues that although universal suffrage means that every one should have a voice, it does not imply that every one should have an equal voice. Mill claims that the opinions
and judgements of intellectual possess more worth than those of the average men and therefore the principle of one man, one vote is illogical. Wise men are definitely superior and consequently more influential. It would be painful if a Constitution regards "ignorance to be entitled to as much political power as knowledge."69 He emphasizes that opinions must be both counted and weighed. More votes should be assigned to those whose opinions are of greater value. Excluding individuals from having any voice is different from giving preference to a more potential wise voice.

Thus, Mill advocates universal suffrage in a modified form. Franchise is weighed in favour of education and intellectual superiority. Only those persons who prove their worth are eligible for the right to vote and all those who are highly intelligent are qualified for plural votes. But is this assertion of Mill not contrary to the democratic ideals? Mill would argue that equal voting is only a relative good for if we accept the equal voting principle, it would mean every body has an equal right to control the government.70 The power which the suffrage gives is not over himself alone; it is power over others also; whatever control the voter is enabled to exercise over his own concerns, he exercises the same degree of it over those of everyone else.
it can in no sort be admitted that all persons have an equal claim to power over others. The claims of different people to such power differ as much as their qualifications for exercising it beneficially.\textsuperscript{71}

He contends that voting is not only a matter of right but also of duty. In a democracy it is equal opportunity which is demanded and not equality of talents and intelligence. Once we recognize equality of opportunity we also recognize inequality of talents. The object of elections is to choose leaders and the best form of election will select best qualified leaders. Highly qualified leaders should consciously attempt to mould public opinion.\textsuperscript{72}

Thus, individual discrimination can be justified, according to Mill, on the basis of one’s mental superiority.\textsuperscript{73} The nature of one’s occupation serves as a criterion for judging one’s intelligence. More votes should be given to those who perform superior functions and adopt occupations which postulate a high level of education and intelligence. Graduates of universities, members of liberal professions should be entitled to plural votes. The scheme of plurality of votes should be open to all classes whether poor or rich. If one can prove his intelligence and ability by voluntary examinations, he should be entitled to more votes. This privilege should not be refused to anyone who can show his worth.
Mill holds that the success of this system is based on the true tests of one's capabilities. To ascertain one's mental superiority a trustworthy system of examination is essential. He says that it is only after the establishment of a systematic National Education by which the various grades of politically valuable acquirement may be accurately defined and authenticated, without this it will always remain liable to strong objections.

Mill is usually charged for being an elitist for he suggests plural voting for intellectuals, geniuses and the better educated. It gives rise to the feeling that he favours intellectuals more than common people. The term elite generally refer to a select few in a society who can be distinguished from the generality of people on account of certain factors which give them a distinct advantage over others. From the political point of view, the elite are those who have an easy access to political power or those who are likely to gain or hold such power.

The rule of the elite seems contradictory to the idea of government by the people. In this context it may be argued that these two ideals conflict with each other. On the one side there is the deep conviction of Mill that people should be free to develop themselves;
and on the other, he envisages a society in which those who possess superior knowledge exercise dominion over others, who are less gifted, in the pursuit and attainment of noble ends. It seems that Mill's suggestion that the elite should guide the people reflects Mill's desire to see intellectuals exercise authority over the common people by propounding a body of commanding doctrine. This is an indication of his authoritarian outlook.

However, according to Mill to favour intellectuals is in no way contradictory or inconsistent with the idea of true democracy. In most of his writings, Mill looks upon the elite as a means for educating people as to their social responsibilities. He does not consider the elite as a repository of truth or a guardian of morals. An elite may impose an opinion on others, but not rules or laws. It may set standards of conduct but it cannot compel adherence to them. Mill does not speak of an elite that is organized into a ruling party requiring obedience from the non-elite.

Mill does not imply an acceptance of elite rule. For him, the value of an elite lies in its utility as an educated, socially mobile, political and cultural force in which various interests and common purposes are fused. In other words the elite for Mill is a means to raise the intellectual level of the non-elite.
which necessarily excludes compulsion or legal imposition. It may provide standards of conduct but it cannot compel adherence to them. R.J. Hill rightly says, that for Hill:

"... there was no question of an elite organized as a separate ruling group or party controlling opinion and demanding deference from the non-elite. Nor did Hill accept the idea of government composed solely of trained officials or bureaucrats." Hill considers aristocratic rule to be a barrier of good government. He writes:

"The honour and glory of the average man... is that he can respond internally to wise and noble things, and be led to them with his eyes open." Plural voting is demanded to create a balance between the two classes and to provide security against the harmful effects of universal suffrage. At the same time he cautions us that the principle of plurality of votes should not be carried to such an extent that those who are privileged by it would outnumber the rest of the community.

Thus, Hill is not an elitist and does not aim at elite rule but he asserts that although the elite are in minority, their intellectual debates would contribute to raise the standard of political reasoning as a whole. The guidance by the elite would elevate...
the level of culture and enlightenment in a democratic society. Mill relies on the elite to provide knowledge and principles which are rational and reflecting men would recognize as truly binding. He visualizes the elite gradually gaining ascendancy and a position of authority by means of persuasion and education. C.B. Macpherson who is impressed by the idea of plural voting says that Mill must be counted more of a democrat for he took people not as they were but as he thought them capable of becoming relieved.

Mill regards education as a pre-requisite for any free society. Since, enlightened electorate and wise rulers are essential to the success of democracy and it is the duty of the state to see that at least a minimum of education is within the reach of everybody. Mill sees in education a solution for corruption. The main purpose of education is to bring individuals closer to the ideal of utility. Compulsory and elementary education will help people in forming a society which shall aim at the maximum realization of happiness. It is with the help of universal reading that the intellect and character of the lettered class can be improved.

Mill is one of the last democrats to argue in favour of plural voting. The theory of plural voting has not received much attention and popularity for people
are unconvinced and less impressed by this scheme either in theory or in practice. Even educated people differ at times in their decisions or may not be capable of giving required decisions regarding political issues, whereas an uneducated man who is aware of political ongoings may decide in the right manner. William Rosson contends that "A degree in Geology, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Botany etc., contribute in themselves nothing to political education. The University Franchise discloses no greater wisdom or judgement on the part of university graduates than that shown by any other constituency." Hence, it seems that literacy is not a necessary condition of good and true democracy. Educated people may not vote honestly and intelligently; on the other hand, uneducated people can be intelligent enough to vote wisely if they train themselves to discuss and participate in political problems keeping in view the principle of common good.

Today it is an open question: whether universal suffrage has really contributed to limiting the power of rulers as was hoped by Mill? The problem is that all eligible voters do not necessarily vote. If a large part of the population does not exercise its right to vote, in what sense can we say that a government is representative of the whole people? Surely voting cannot be made a legal
obligation for, if people are compelled, they may not perform their duty well. Mill rightly foresees that corruption in society could endanger the democratic system.

Mill's fear can very well be seen in today's societies, e.g. Votes can be bought, people can be threatened to vote for a particular person or party. How can we overcome this difficulty? In this connection, Mill advocates open voting. He argues that the right to vote is given to an individual not for his personal benefit but for the general good. It is a trust on behalf of the public and the public should know for whom an individual has voted. Voting is a matter of duty and an individual should make use of it impartially. It should be open to public criticism and scrutiny. Open voting, he feels, is more advantageous than secret ballot.

Secret ballot can be justified if voters are slaves and under the influence of their masters. They should in fact know that their vote is as valuable as their master's is. It is possible that a voter's own preference may induce him to act wrongly, but his feeling of responsibility may check him and help him to act rightly if he is to act publicly and not secretly. Moreover, he argues that secrecy gives an idea that the right to vote is given for his own benefit and not as a public trust. Therefore,
to overcome the selfishness of voters, Mill contends that open voting is better than secret ballot for secret ballot may lead an individual away from the sense of responsibility and may encourage a person to vote as he likes. People will vote more dishonestly out of malice, enmity and prejudice in secret ballot than in an open voting.

But are people really free in the sense explained by Mill? Can corruption be overcome by open voting? The idea of open voting is not favoured today by most of the democratic countries. It is felt that open voting encourages the selfish potentialities of the voter himself. People can be threatened by others to vote for a particular candidate or party. Most of the democratic countries think that secret ballot is better than open voting because an individual can vote for the person he deliberately chooses without letting others know about it. But we find today that even in secret ballot there is a lot of corruption. People sometimes vote according to their selfish interests, feeling secure that nobody will know about their selfish nature as the secret ballot safeguards them.

The above discussion shows that neither the system of open ballot nor the system of secret ballot is good in itself to overcome the problem of corruption. Perhaps corruption is inherent in any society where human beings
organize themselves into a collective group to serve common ends, which are basically individualistic. People may learn the tricks of evading their moral duties to serve their selfish ends. Then what is it that assures the success of universal suffrage?

To be sure, the success of self government depends on the character of the people, the quality of education and the moral training they get, as is rightly maintained by Will. If the election does not result in accordance with our expectations it is mainly due to the character of people. How can there be justice in a society if judges take bribes, witnesses tell lies? If both the electors and the elected are stupid, ignorant and dishonest then all acts of government will go wrong.

Can there be any progress if the individuals forming a society are lethargic, inactive and dishonest? Will holds that people are passive, it is possible that they may surrender to some tyrannical power or they may trust a few men whom they have entrusted with power. All progress in mankind is brought about by active and self helping characters. Strong prejudices, ignorance, obstinate adherence to old habits, etc., will affect the management of public affairs. All men should love and trust one another. Good qualities like industry, justice, courage, enterprise, originality, invention and prudence
all are conducive to good management. Further, when people are attached to savage independence and do not even tolerate the amount of power which is necessary for their own good, democracy cannot be successful. A society consisting of such people is not ripe for representative government because government cannot carry out certain necessary functions unless vested with power. The indifferent attitude, inability to understand the processes of government and non-cooperation of people may prove to be a fatal obstacle to the functioning of any government. People should take all necessary steps for the preservation of an institution in case its existence is endangered. Thus, it is essential that the people should be willing and capable of fulfilling their duties in a representative Constitution.

Thus, a good government consists in developing and promoting conditions for a good moral character and personal traits. The quality of both the governed and the governors and of the machinery is very significant, i.e. "the degree in which it is adapted to take advantage of the amount of good qualities which at any time exist, and make them instrumental to the right purposes." Bad machinery lowers the morality of people while good government is conducive to intellectual advance and progress. The function of the government is not only
to develop moral and mental capacities but also to make the best use of the existing moral and intellectual faculties of people. In this context Will writes:

"A government is to be judged by its actions upon men, and by its action upon things; by what it makes of the citizens, and what it does with them; its tendency to improve or deteriorate the people themselves, and the goodness or badness of the work it performs for them, and by means of them." 89

(Italics mine)

The worth of the state can be judged by the worth of the individuals composing it and by the value of experience it promotes among its people. 89

Will favours democracy and regards it as ideally the best polity mainly because of its moral foundations. It greatly improves and develops the character of its people for it makes them more intelligent, active, self-dependent, practical and less envious. If the moral capacities of individuals are stunted in a state, it cannot be regarded as a good government. Representative government gives people moral training by helping them to look at questions from an objective point of view.

It may be pointed out that in democracy politicians who want to get themselves elected resort to all sorts of tricks and try to appeal to the interests of some particular group. They appeal to the feelings and passions of people. This is very often seen in an election speech.
In such an atmosphere each group of electors is tempted
to consider its own interests as the aim of its political
activity. Thus, the general spread of public spirit,
which is very necessary to the good working of a democracy
is opposed by a mechanism inherent in the nature of
democracy.93

Since majority has unlimited power, it becomes
selfish and develops a kind of disdain towards the
minority. For the possession of power makes it difficult,
if not impossible, to resist the temptation to misuse it.
He contends that possession of power hardens the heart.

In this context J.F. Stephens writes:

"The fact is that we all more or less condemn
and blame each other, and this truth is so
unpleasant that oceans of sophistry have been
poured out for the purpose of evading or
concealing it."94

According to him democracy always tends to have a harmful
effect on one's character. In this context Tocqueville
writes:

"Democratic institutions have a very strong
tendency to promote the feeling of envy in
the human heart; not so much because they
afford to everyone the means of rising to
the level of any of his fellow-citizens, but
because those means perpetually disappoint
the persons who employ them. Democratic
institutions awaken and foster a passion for
equality which they can never entirely
satisfy."95

(italics mine)
This is the main reason why notable men are usually not placed at the head of affairs, he says that democracy has a tendency to discourage recognition and reverence for all higher types of excellence. But to what extent is this correct?

Mill himself recognizes the fact that there are people who think that no other person has a better opinion than their own and if this bent of mind exists, they will elect only those who reflect the image of their own sentiments. He writes:

"It cannot be denied that a complete democracy has a strong tendency to cast the sentiments of the electors in this mould... that it destroys reverence for more social position, must be counted among the good, not the bad part of its influences; though by doing this it closes the principal school of reverence (as to merely human relations) which exist in society."93

And it is for this very reason Mill emphasizes the importance of plural votes for more educated persons.

Richard Robinson holds that although democracy encourages selfishness, envy, hatred for each other, it is only a temporary phenomenon, on the whole it tends to improve the nation's character. While participating in the affairs of the State, an individual acquires insight into the needs and interests of others. He willingly learns to understand another man's point of
view, and to share his interests and opinions with others. He consults others and develops a co-operative spirit, and learns to pay equal respect to all his fellow beings. Will hoped that the common man will become conscious of his real interests and in order to defend them he will assert his claim to political power.

Even if we accept that in a democracy, an individual is provided full scope for developing his capacities and reach his full stature, a question can be raised; how many people are really interested in developing themselves? We find that not all individuals are equally interested for some would be afraid of making a choice and may follow the path of conformity. This may lead to an uninteresting, unexciting, unauthentic and alienated existence, but to be an individual is to be an authentic man. As Warren E. Gibson writes:

"To exist is to be aware of what I am not, to feel a lack, an emptiness or nothingness, to sense an unfulfilled potential. Transcendence is action of movement inclined to fill the emptiness, to go beyond the given to fulfill my potential or to avoid doing so."94

To achieve this, one should try to overcome all obstacles and forces which hinder one's development. There may be a number of social and political barriers to restrict one's development. Authenticity is hardly realized even though the democratic government provides the best ground...
for achieving it. If democracy provides people the opportunity to develop themselves, what is the nature of these opportunities?

Any number of democratic thinkers would agree with Mill that it is the participation of an individual in the political affairs that helps him to develop his individuality and attain his identity. Discussion and participation enable democracy to moralize politics because in discussions which are public, it is necessary to take the moral point of view to persuade others. Participation induces them to read and think more about the political problems and thus it will increase their knowledge. It increases the value of one's freedom. Participation in political affairs is a direct correlate of responsibility on the part of people. The idea of responsibility implies deliberate choice. E.g., universal suffrage enables an individual to participate in political affairs, which acts as a stimulant to develop his intellectual powers, which can further enlighten his judgement and help him to overcome prejudices and rectify errors.

When an individual does something for the public, his work no longer remains a routine affair. To work for the general welfare provides him with a kind of impetus and a motivation to his feelings for others. Once the individual recognizes the effectiveness of his
vote, he becomes "self-protecting and self-dependent". Will contends that:

"... human beings are only secure from evil at the hands of others in proportion as they have the power of being, and are self-protecting; and they only achieve a high degree of success in their struggle with Nature in proportion as they are self-dependent, relying on what they themselves can do, either separately or in concert, rather than on what others do for them." 

(italics in original)

Nousseu too recognizes the value of participation. He says participation has a psychological effect on the individual. It establishes a kind of relationship between the working of an institution and an individual. Like Will, he says it helps in protecting private interest and ensuring good government. He contends that, through the educative process, the individual will eventually come to feel little or no conflict between the demands of the public and private spheres.

The type of individuals and their participation, that we expect in a democratic society has its roots in the training and the kind of education they get. Will rightly emphasizes the educational value of participation in developing one's intellectual faculties, sentiments, active character, a feeling of moral discipline, for there is a demand for social functions in a democracy. According to Will morality consists of two parts. The first is self-education, the training attained by an
individual himself of his own will. The second part consists in the regulation of his outward actions. Without the first the second is imperfect, for we cannot judge how many of our actions will affect even our worldly interests or those of others, unless we take into account their influence on the regulation of our or their affections and desires. Individuals are capable of self education. Unless people attempt to cultivate themselves, their desires would remain self-regarding. One must learn to see the relation between self education and social education. Both individual and social improvement are inter-dependent. Self education and self culture presuppose a critical mind. No one can think of improving himself if he acts from sheer force of habit or passively accepts the opinions of others. The idea of self-culture explains the hatred of utilitarianism towards intuitionism and strict adherence to customary preference and commonly applied opinions.

Thus, from the foregoing account it becomes obvious that, the essence of democracy lies in attaining the true identity of the individuals through the process of participation, which is attained through representation to the various shades and segments of the social whole. Democracy has been conceived as the best mode of realizing the authenticity and dignity of human individuality.
As we have seen earlier, the ultimate ethical ideal for Mill was the happiness of mankind which could be manifested in the growth and development of individuality and the realization of intrinsically superior values of freedom, justice and equality etc. Democracy has been discussed as a socio-political base for seeking these ethically desirable ideals. But while we have spoken at some length about the concepts of liberty and democracy in Mill, we have not yet considered his views on justice and equality. In fact, our quest for the ethical foundations of Mill's socio-political thought will not be complete unless we analyze and evaluate his views on the nature of these two concepts i.e. justice and equality. The next chapter, therefore, is an attempt in that direction.

REFERENCES:

2. Ibid., p. 207.
6. Ibid., p. 256.

8. Ibid., p. 155.


10. Ibid., p. 316.

11. Ibid., p. 229.


15. Ibid., p. 255.


25. Ibid., p. 207.


28. Ibid., p. 183.

29. Ibid., p. 183.

30. Ibid., p. 184.

31. Ibid., p. 184.

32. Ibid., p. 184.
42. It is only recently that universal suffrage is recognized. For many years blacks were treated badly, the poor were penalized for their poverty and women had no right to vote.


51. Ibid., p. 36.


55. Ibid., p. 58.


68. Ibid., p. 289.


76. Ibid., p. 476.

77. Ibid., p. 476.


Mill was in favour of secret ballot, but later he changed his opinion because he felt that the power of coercing the voters had declined as compared to previous times. Earlier the voters were dependent upon the powerful rich class of landlords and borough managers, they could not exercise their right of voting freely, honestly and intelligently. He opines that the lower class is not dependent in the same manner upon the higher class and therefore voters can vote honestly.


97. C. Pateman, Participation and Democratic Theory, p. 25.
