Jawaharlal Nehru as a Democratic Humanist

3. Jawaharlal Nehru as a Democratic Humanist

Democracy is a specific form of government. The term also refers to the country that has a democratic form of government. The idea of democracy began to develop in Ancient Greece as early as in 600 B.C. The word 'democracy' itself comes from the Greek words 'demos' and 'kratos' which means 'people' and 'rule or authority' respectively. It follows that democracy means rule of people. Hence, as we all know Abraham Lincoln defined it as the 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people'. In the middle ages, Christianity taught that all men were equal before God. This teaching promoted the democratic ideals of equality and brotherhood among men. During the Renaissance period, the emergence of a new spirit of humanism with its emphasis upon individualism hastened the spread of democracy. People began to demand greater freedom in all areas of life. During the 19th century, democracy developed steadily with the result that when kings were retained they had to satisfy with nominal powers. The Industrial revolution brought political changes of great importance. During the second half of 19th century, the working classes demanded and gained greater political rights. New laws gave more and more citizens the right to vote. The freedom of speech, the press, assembly and religion were extended and
of course, modern democracy is different from the ancient direct democracy. The present democracy is representative democracy in which people elect a certain number of fellow citizens to represent them in making decisions which shape the future of the people.

The Indian democracy is a synthesis of European liberalism of the 19th century and the dynamic philosophy of modern Indian leaders who have rediscovered the long forgotten strings of Eastern genius. This process of synthesis between India and the West was a result of the impact of Western learning and culture on Indian thought. Through Western education, the Indians were able to ponder over their past and present, and to discard all what could not stand the test of reason, humanism and liberalism. The newly awakened self-consciousness of India led the leaders of modern India to dream and work for building India into a great nation. The impact of West on Indian political ideas and institutions has been salutary. The traditional political system of India was characterised by 'non-participating obedience' of the people in the political process. The spread of Western education enabled them to have access to the works of men like Edmund Burke and John Stuart Mill whose writings were the sources of liberal democratic ideas. They cultivatred a high respect and devotion to the values of liberty, equality and justice and to the system of parliamentary democracy which encouraged people's
participation in the political process. Thus Western liberalism and rationalism, coupled with democratic socialist doctrines, committed the political leaders of modern India to the establishment of a democratic, secular, and socialist state in the sub-continent.

Another significant aspect of the Western contribution to India is to be found in the realm of judicial administration. The British Government introduced a uniform system of justice and law enforcement under the High Courts established by the Crown. This judicial system, together with the civil and criminal procedures and methods of evaluation of evidence, were retained intact by independent India. Thus, we may say that, the foundations for a sound administrative machinery, local self government, independent judiciary and parliamentary structure laid down during the British regime were retained intact by independent India.

Jawaharlal Nehru was the chief architect of India's destiny. He led the country on the path of democracy, secularism, nationalism, and industrialisation. As a humanist, he had an unsurpassable love towards humanity and hate for everything that was inhuman. He considered democracy as the best form of government because he believed that it preserved the highest of human values. So his activities were largely guided by the ideals of democracy. Again, he firmly believed that socialism can be
realised only through democracy. Democracy, like socialism, meant to him the removal of disparities. He always considered socialism as an extension of democracy and wanted to check the drawbacks of socialist planning through the development of democratic techniques. So his social philosophy may be described as 'Democratic socialism'. He fully appreciated democratic values and methods. Nehru's emphasis on the all-sided development of individual in society made him to be a democratic humanist. As a matter of fact, it was his faith in the dignity of man, which led him to lay faith in the democratic system of government. Faith in the people is the essence of his concept of democracy.

India, being diverse in her religious faiths, and languages and with a multiplicity of land systems, was in need of national policies and programmes which would help her to maintain and strengthen her unity, integrity and stability. So Nehru considered that democracy best suited to our conditions and requirements. But he did not want our democratic system to be a replica of the system in some other country. Instead, he wanted the democracy in India to develop features that were essentially Indian. He wanted to have such features which would fit in with the temper of the people and that are acceptable to them. He was not happy with the democratic set up of the West which had lost the element of humanism. A serious weakness of Western democracy, according to Nehru was that political power there became
monopoly of the dominant class. To him, the true democracy must be based on liberty, equality and progress through peaceful methods. These ideals were in no way new. But Nehru pleaded for their unrestricted practice. He remarked "Above all, we believe in liberty, equality, the dignity of individual and the freedom of human spirit. Because of this we are firmly wedded to the democratic way of life." \(^1\)

Throughout his life, Nehru stressed the importance of democracy. He had faith in democracy as a way of life and considered it as the basis of social structure. Broadly, democracy emphasized equality of opportunity for all in the political and economic field and freedom for the individual to grow and develop to the best of his potentiality. It also involved a high degree of tolerance. Nehru regarded people as partners in everything. As independent India began to follow the path of democracy, the desire to depend upon the people grew strong in Nehru's mind. He said "One has to find an equilibrium among the various forces at work. In finding this equilibrium in a democratic country, one has to take the vast masses of the people into confidence. One has to produce a sensation in them that they are partners in the vast undertaking of running a nation, partners in government, partners in industry.

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That is the essence of democracy. Thus he considered that it was essential for people to have a genuine sense of involvement in the making of modern India.

Democracy has been described as a system in which one can find the liberty of the people, the realization of the liberty, equality and sovereignty of the people. It is the rule of people expressing their sovereign will by their votes. Jawaharlal Nehru was quite confident of the fact that democracy cannot work successfully and achieve its aims or ideals without the goodwill and fullest co-operation of the people. He also favoured the principle that all questions should be decided by those who are really involved. He believed that democracy cannot go against the people. Nehru used to say that no government can afford to ignore the urges of the common people and that democracy itself was based on those very urges.

An important thing that Nehru wanted was to make Indian democracy universal. He favoured adult franchise and rejected restricted franchise on the ground that it would boost elitist groups. He was of opinion that there was no obvious corelation between political wisdom and formal education. Long before independence, Nehru had argued against restricted franchise. He

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wanted to have 'the fullest democracy' because he thought that the talk of 'restricted democracy' was outdated. He said that people are now thinking of 'larger and deeper democracy'. In *Discovery of India*, he states, "My experience in this matter confirmed my faith in the widest possible franchise I was prepared to trust that wide electorate far more than an restricted one, based on property qualification or even an educational test. The property qualification was any how bad; as for education it was obviously desirable and necessary. But I have not discovered any special qualities in a literate or slightly educated person which would entitle his opinion to greater respect than that of a sturdy peasant, illiterate but full of a limited kind of common sense."³

So when India became independent universal adult suffrage was at once introduced. Indian democracy thus kept the door opened for all. And from time to time, the Indian electorate has shown that despite lack of formal education, it can act with remarkable wisdom in times of distress and crises. Thus Nehru proved right in his concept that universal franchise can be the basis of real democracy.

The right to vote means a share in the government. This right gives the people a consciousness that they are governing themselves and so they can

³ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1982) p.65.
exercise a check on the government, and that they are being consulted. This consciousness is potential enough to keep the government in line with public opinion. As Nehru said while addressing the National Council for Training in Vocational Trades at New Delhi on 30th July, 1957 "A government in a democratic society is a reflection of the will of the people and it should continue to be reflection of this all the time."\(^4\)

To Nehru, democracy in practice did not mean the stifling of the voice of minority by a majority through its sheer voting strength. It "means tolerance, tolerance not merely of those who agree with us, but of those who do not agree with us."\(^5\) The method of democracy, according to him, is discussion, argument, persuasion and a final decision and acceptance of that decision. Tolerance thus signified the willingness to recognise different viewpoints and to allow the strongest view to prevail. Democracy thus requires us to respect each individual as sacred and never to regard ourselves as the only repositories of ultimate truth. If we have differences, it has to be settled by peaceful methods. Resort to direct action or violence is inconsistent with the spirit of democracy. Gandhiji's influence on Nehru was so great that he considered


those believing in violence as enemies of democracy. His faith in peace as a weapon to achieve great objectives was unshakable.

Nehru wanted to establish that democracy and peaceful ways of change were inseparable. He observed that "It is sometimes said that rapid progress cannot take place by peaceful and democratic methods and that authoritarian and coercive methods have to be adopted. I do not accept this proposition. Indeed, in India today any attempt to discard democratic methods would lead to disruption and would thus put an end to any immediate prospect of progress." He hoped that India which had won her independence by peaceful means can make sufficient progress also through peaceful democratic system.

**Parliamentary Democracy**

Jawaharlal Nehru believed that the best form of government was that in which popular participation was assured. That was why India adopted a parliamentary democratic form of government when it became free. This system was best suited to the complex and composite culture of India because it would provide opportunity for all individuals in a diversely composed society to express themselves fully. In this system parliament, being elected by the people, is sovereign. Parliamentary democracy involves peaceful methods of

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action, peaceful acceptance of decisions taken and attempts to change them through peaceful ways only. The vast majority of measures considered and passed by the parliament are in principle considered and passed by all the people. Nehru said, "If I may say so, the people's representatives tend to function on the basis of a feeling of the general pulse of the people. The latter have got the power to kick out a government, or a member, after a certain period of time, as it is important to keep the government or the parliament in check. Again, there exists a general feeling or awareness in the people that things are being done according to their wishes or in consultation with them; in fact, they have begun to feel that they are governing themselves." It is, therefore, the duty of democratic government to take its people into confidence and make them feel their presence and participation in its every decision or action. As a convinced democrat, Nehru believed in the direct appeal to the people in the matters of social change. In a way, he was just widening the parliamentary method itself. He believed that democracy can function only if there was of spirit of democracy in the people. So he laid great emphasis on this popular spirit.

Another reason for Nehru's faith in parliamentary democracy was the

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possibility of change and progress under that system. The keynote of human
history is progress, and parliamentary democracy can best achieve it. Progress
invites problems and they in turn require solution. Democracy has to face this.
Nehru pointed out that "if there are no problems, that is a sign of death. Only
the dead have no problems; the living have problems and they grow by
fighting with problems and overcoming them."\(^8\)

Nehru had a normative impact in the establishment, consolidation and
growth of parliamentary democracy. In making of India's constitution, his role
had been of the visionary, master, architect and builder of the edifice of
parliamentary form of government. The constitution had created democratic
structures at the federal and state levels, and there were Directive Principles of
state policy regarding the promotion of democratic institutions at village level
also. The process of democratic decentralization was forcefully taken forward
under his initiatives and led to an involvement of the masses in the rural areas
in day to day government at village and district levels. He always took care to
ascertain that there was proper distribution of power with a view to promote
decentralization both in decision-making and implementation. The broad
thrust of his effort was to create democratic institutions which are ultimately the
projection of people's character, thinking and aims. He had confidence in the

judgement of the Indian public and tried to involve them in every aspect of modern development. He was thus giving a wider base and greater stability to the parliamentary democracy of India.

The smooth functioning of parliamentary democracy during Nehru's primeministership induced an unshakable permanence and strength to the system. Changes of government following elections occurred smoothly proving the efficacy of the system and the strong roots it had developed. Jawaharlal Nehru, throughout his seventeen years as Prime Minister, enriched the ethos of parliamentary democracy in India by his exemplary attitude towards matters pertaining to Parliament. He was very particular about attending every sitting of the parliament and questions concerning his portfolios were answered by him personally. He was open to correction and was always prepared to modify a previous stand. He was not ruthless in his methods and working and believed in winning over opponents rather than fighting them. Jawaharlal's attitude towards criticism in a parliamentary democracy provides a telling illustration of his democratic spirit. He valued criticism. He hoped to gain grains of truth from it. But more than that it was a matter of principle. The right to criticism was considered by him as a part and parcel of parliamentary democracy - so long as it was based on honest interpretation of facts. Nehru's sense of responsibility to the system was not confined to concern about his
party or government's position, but it included opposition as well. He treated opposition with due consideration, though in his time the opposition was a tiny minority. As unchallenged leader of the nation and of the ruling party enjoying overwhelming majority in the parliament, Nehru never used his strength to steam roll and humble the opposition.

Jawaharlal Nehru did not dominate or seek to dominate members of his cabinet. His colleagues in Government felt free to express their frank opinion on any matter before the Council of Ministers. They had the confidence that Panditji expected them to function in consonance with true democratic spirit. He expected ministers to take decisions within the scope of their powers and responsibility.

The government in a democracy is however a party government. Regarding this Nehru pointed out that, "it is good to have various parties because when there are different approaches to a problem more light is thrown upon it. I do not believe in all people being regimented to think in one way. I want free flow and free exchange and out of that we sometimes find a bit of truth." He considered that disciplined political parties were indispensable not only for efficient government, but also for representing the masses. He always

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9 Ibid. p.36.

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stood for achieving a national consensus by consultation with the various political parties, in the formation of all major policies particularly those concerning with economic and industrial planning. In a country like India, there are a variety of opinions over almost every subject. Since opinions differ, inevitably parties also differ. But for the smooth running of democracy, Nehru advocates, "the democratic method inevitably implies trying to understand the other party's opinion, a certain give-and-take, and a certain adjustment to whatever the final decision might be. If this does not happen, we simply go to pieces."\(^{10}\) Again in spite of all this, Nehru always insisted that when time comes, people have to rise above party and think of the nation. He added that sometimes they will have to think even of the world at large, of which our nation is a part.

Thus Nehru's concept of parliamentary democracy revolved around certain principles like popular sovereignty through representatives, election by adult franchise, majority rule, responsible political parties and leadership. According to him, parliamentary democracy was apt to be extinct if these vital elements were destroyed.

Some drawbacks of parliamentary democracy

In spite of all his praise for democracy, Nehru was fully aware of the limitations of this system. One such drawback is election which is an essential and inseparable part of democratic process. Concerning it Nehru wrote, "yet often enough, elections brought out the evil side of man, and it was obvious that they did not always lead to the success of better man." But in spite of this comment, Nehru made it clear that such evils were prevalent only where electorates are small, and under the widest possible franchise, which India has chosen, such evils are likely to vanish.

Secondly, though Nehru was proud of India's biggest electorate, he did not hesitate to say that "with all my admiration and love for democracy, I am not prepared to accept the statement the largest number of people are always right." In spite of this, he was determined to build India through democratic methods. Speaking in this regard, he said "we have decided to do so because we feel that democracy offers society something of the highest human values."

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11 Jawaharlal Nehru. 'The Discovery of India' [New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1982] p.65.
13 Ibid.
Another serious defect is pointed out by Sri. V.M. Tarakunde in his article "Humanist Approach to Politics." It relates to the party system involved in parliamentary democracy. He wrote "parties operate as the means by which power is taken away from the people and concentrated in few hands and in their struggle for power, parties pander to the weaknesses of the people, such as blind faith and their adherence to the evil traditions of casteism and religious communalism."\textsuperscript{14}

The greatest danger to democracy is war, said Nehru. Because war puts an end to the very values democracy cherishes. Among other drawbacks of democracy Nehru finds wastage of time and energy. But as a working democrat, Nehru proceeds with optimism ignoring these demerits. He looked for new developments so that democracy can keep pace with time. He thus took India along the path of mature system of parliamentary democracy. This peaceful progress on constitutional basis was seen with admiration all over the world.

Nehru more than once pointed out that democracy can function only in a society where equality prevails. Because of his inborn socialist and democratic instinct, he gave special attention to the status of women also. He

tried his best to give women a chance for expression. Speaking on the Hindu Code Bill in the Loksabha in 1955, he observed, "you cannot have a democracy if you cut off a large chunk of democracy, fifty percent of the people, and put them in a class apart in regard to social privileges and the like." There is no doubt that the enactment of this code, giving equal rights to Hindu men and women in matters of marriage and succession to property was the result largely of Nehru's determination to remove inequality between men and women in India.

**Concept of freedom in democracy**

Absolute faith in the freedom of man was also a reason which made Nehru a staunch democrat. He believed in the freedom of spirit. In his study of the Indo-Aryan Philosophy, Jawaharlal Nehru saw a kind of metaphysical democracy which formed the background to social existence. In *Discovery of India* he wrote, "He who sees the one spirit in all, and all in the one spirit, henceforth can look with contempt on no creature." He thought that such a philosophy might have affected life and produced an atmosphere of tolerance, reasonableness, acceptance of free thought in the matters of faith and the

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16 Jawaharlal Nehru. 'The Discovery of India' [New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1982] p.91.
capacity to live and let live, which were the dominant features of Indian culture. Nehru discovered that the sages of the past were attached passionately to this idea of freedom and he wanted to see everything in terms of it. He very often said that this urge of freedom had developed democratic ways of living in the society from time immemorial.

Nehru had visualised India regaining in full measure the ancient ethos of universal humanism wherein the dignity of every human being and his freedom were respected. He believed that Indian society cannot last long without such social virtues and so he insisted that the same freedom of thought and expression should be assured to the individual today, if democracy is to have meaning. It is because of this firm belief that the constitution guaranteed "to all the people of India ............ freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action."17 Thus his concept of individual freedom necessarily implied freedom of speech and expression, of association and all other fields of creative activities. He added that the creative and adventurous spirit of man could grow only in an atmosphere of freedom and responsibility. According to him, the general health of the society was largely

determined by the freedom of its people. Nehru wanted to make a new India where there was freedom and equal opportunity for all people.

As a democrat who believed in the importance of individual, Nehru thought that a democratic State alone will represent a structure of society in which freedom is cherished and in which values can be best realised. One of the reasons for Nehru's fascination for democracy as against authoritarianism was that the former was based on reason while the latter had its basis on dogmatism. Free discussion and inquisitive search for truth, had no place in authoritarianism, but these constituted the very essence of democracy. The authoritarian systems do not permit free growth and development of individuals. Fascism offered man fulfilment, not through his personality or individual self, but through complete and blind obedience to the State. Fascism and Nazism stood for a complete and uncompromising denial of the principles of liberalism and democracy. They based themselves upon the total subordination of the individual. The rights and freedom of man were denied in favour of State. Communism also, according to him, crushes the free spirit of man. Though certain aspects of communism attracted him, his mind revolted against it when the question of basic human values was taken into consideration. He was against the undemocratic features in communism and was irritated by their dictatorial ways and aggressive methods.
The modern democratic State is frequently confronted with the problem of defining the relationship between individual freedom and order in society. Nehru said in this regard that "unless the state is perfect and every individual is perfect, there is always some conflict between the freedom of the individual and the security of the state."^18 Mans freedom and individuality was of foremost importance for him. He did not want individual to be thrown into the rubbish heap of humanity but wanted to be regarded as significant and purposeful. Nehru's cardinal principle was that State existed for the individual and not the other way. He did not want man to be suppressed by State or any other institution. He maintained that the State was only a means to an end and not an end in itself.

Individual freedom is absolutely necessary to the modern democratic State and democracy would cease to exist in its absence. To promote and preserve human values, both society and individual must enjoy freedom. Nehru held that individuals in their separate entity should unite for the welfare of the State, which is nothing but the welfare of the people as a whole. He discarded the concept of 'police state' and stood for a 'socialist state', which alone could serve the cause of the individual in a modern society. Nehru was

keen to strike a balance between the security of the state and the freedom of the individual. If the individual seeks protection of law, society also necessitates protection against the selfish and predatory individuals. So Nehru said that no simple formula could be given to draw the line between the freedom of the individual and security and order of the state. It depended on the circumstances. He felt that "in times of war the demarcation should be in favour of State and in peace it should be to the advantage of the individual." 19 Thus, with regard to the place of individual in socialist State, Nehru maintained that individual freedom has got to be correlated with the social structure.

**Economic democracy**

In the early years of struggle for independence, democracy for Nehru meant the ideal of self rule or responsible government. During the later years, he altered his views on democracy stressing more and more on its economic aspects. He had rightfully recognised that to bring about real democracy, what was required was not only to provide adult suffrage to the people, but to remove economic inequalities. On the other hand, Nehru observed, "political power which the vote was supposed to give was seen to be a shadow with no

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substance, without economic power......\textsuperscript{20} He said that in the past, democracy had taken mainly to mean political democracy and it was roughly represented by the idea of every person having a vote. So he said that "political democracy by itself is not enough except that it may be used to obtain gradually increasing measure of economic democracy.\textsuperscript{21}

Jawaharlal Nehru while highlighting the objectives of economic aspects of democracy pointed out that the ultimate goal of this system was to wind up the barrier between the have's and have nots'. Liberty and democracy he thought, had no meaning without economic equality. In his theory of economic democracy, he wanted the good things of life to be made available to more and more people and thus the gross inequalities to be removed. He once remarked, "Political democracy is inevitably going in the direction, everywhere of what might be called economic democracy. It may take different forms, but only in the measure that it solves the economic problems does it succeed even in the political field. If the economic problems are not solved, then the political structure tends to weaken and crack up."\textsuperscript{22} Thus in


\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
the ultimate analysis, democracy for Nehru implied a mental approach applied to both political and economic problems.

Nehru wanted economic changes through democratic methods. So he sought a system which could realize economic growth and social justice without the sacrifice of freedom and democratic rights of common citizen. He did not want India to initiate the economic model of any other country, but to evolve a system suited to her own requirements. As pointed out by Dr. Harbans Pathak, "from the historical point of view, Nehru understood the 'shell' of Indian system to be capitalistic and its 'essence' feudalistic." Hence Nehru continued to stress the importance of socialism for tackling contemporary economic and social problems. But he did not want to break abruptly with the country's geographical, historical, religious, economic and social background because he firmly believed that future has to be built on the foundations laid in the past and the present. So he finally took a stand in favour of mixed economy, in which he asserted that socialist principles and ideals would prevail generally along with a fair share of capitalism. To him, mixed economy was a

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23 See Dr. Harbans Pathak, 'Jawaharlal Nehru and Economic Planning' in Dr. V. Bhaskara Rao and Dr. A. Amruth Rao, Ed. 'Nehru and administration' [Delhi, Ajanta Publications, 1989] p.61.
synthesis of two systems of capitalistic and communist forms of economy. But it was free from their dogmatic approaches and represented a higher form.

Nehru's concept of mixed economy envisaged the simultaneous participation of the public and private sectors in the developmental activities. He very firmly held that such a system of economy alone would be suitable to the Indian conditions because the crucial problem for India was production which could be regulated even without complete nationalization. He aimed at running public enterprises in such a way that on the one hand, there should be adequate checks and protections, and on the other hand enough freedom for the enterprises to work efficiently. He also believed that mixed economy alone possessed flexibility and resilience to assimilate changes in human activity and modes of production made possible by the growth of science and technology.

According to the system of mixed economy as envisaged by Nehru, key sectors of the economy were to be wholly under State control, while the private sector would operate in other spheres. However, private sectors must be so subjected to the control of the State that it would function only within the objectives of national plan. Thus he wanted more and more State control over the private sector so that the mixed economy can sufficiently adapt itself to the changing conditions. He stressed this because he wanted us to move in the direction of democratically planned collectivism. He said "change will have to
be in the direction of a democratically planned collectivism ....... A democratic collectivism need not mean an abolition of private property, but it will mean the public ownership of the basic and major industries. It will mean the co-operative or collective control of the land. In India especially it will be necessary to have, in addition to big industries, co-operatively controlled small and village industries. Such a system of democratic collectivism will need careful and continuous planning and adaptation to the changing needs of the people ........ An equalization of income will not result from all this, but there will be far more equitable sharing and a progressive tendency towards equilization."24 Thus the system, in short, emphasized democratically planned development within the framework of mixed economy with private, public and co-operative sections to achieve the objectives of modernization, growth and social justice.

**Economic Planning**

Nehru wanted to introduce planning into the economic activities of the Nation. Economic planning was dear to him and the example of planning in Russia enthused him greatly. He was impressed by the development that Soviet Union brought about by planned effort. He felt that we should follow

the same path if we wanted to get rid of our poverty. Applying planning to a democratic State was a new experiment. But Nehru was eager to give a planned economic content to the democratic structure of Indian Society. For him, democracy and planning were not inconsistent with each other. He asserted, "If anybody is going to tell me that in a democratic structure planning has no meaning, I am not prepared to accept that statement." He suggested that in a planned democracy, the system of free market should be subordinated to social ownership of means of production. Planning through democratic means was an indispensable element of his method of social reconstruction. Nehru emphasized that for combining democracy with socialistic planning, it is essential to win the good will and co-operation of the people. He was convinced that planning without democracy was only meaningless as democracy without socialism. So he insisted that socialism and planned development required full co-operation of the people.

Even before the independence, Nehru realized that economic regeneration and progressive modern life could not be achieved without concerted planning. Insistence on planning for socio-economic reconstruction thus became a cardinal feature of his thought. He believed that planning was

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essential for achieving socialist objectives. In 1938 itself congress appointed a National Planning Committee with Nehru as its chairman and he boldly accepted the challenging task. He formulated certain economic policies with the aid and advice of the eminent economists of the country who were on the committee. Its main objectives were: (i) attainment of national self sufficiency and (2) doubling of per capita income within a decade. The statement of objective made by him became a significant document in economic planning in India.

Nehru was deeply attached to the concept of planning as a technique of advancement of productivity. He believed in the inter-dependence of science and planning and considered it as the application of science to the national problems. According to him, planning means "having some conception of the goal we are striving for, of the kind of society we are aiming at, trying to work towards that end harmoniously and peacefully with as few upsets as possible, laying down targets so that on all sectors we may advance simultaneously."\textsuperscript{26} He often said that the only way to overcome our problems was through the instrumentality of planning. In fact, Nehru wanted his democratic planning to be welfare oriented. He wanted planning to be instrumental in producing

maximum wealth and making such arrangement for its distribution that it reaches all the people. Nehru was of the view that planning had a social purpose as well. It was expected to bring about a new orientation in social outlook. In his own words, planning was meant "to bring about a new social order free from exploitation, poverty, unemployment, and injustice."  

After independence, Nehru emphasized the necessity for a rapid and radical but peaceful socio-economic transition. He adopted planning not as an end, but as a means aiming at the well-being and advancement of the people as a whole, as the opening up of opportunity to all and the growth of freedom and the method of co-operative organisation and action."  

To secure a satisfactory rate of growth and a strong industrial base for the economy, recourse to planning was indispensable. We have only limited resources in terms of materials and skills. To utilise these scarce resources to the best, we had to lay down priorities. Appropriate policies and organisations were also needed for their effective implementation. So Nehru insisted on planned economic development. Talking in simple language to the millions of our


people throughout the country, he made planning and its concept understandable to them.

Nehru considered planning as a perpetual affair which was apt to go on for generations. Planning, according to him, "consists in having an objective, not only an immediate objective, but a more distant objective. We cannot plan only for tomorrow, we have to plan for years ......." Planning was concerned with both industry and agriculture and it paid adequate attention to a large number of allied things such as transport, health, education and social services.

The Planning Commission drafted three Five Years Plans during Nehru's era. In the first Five Year Plan, top priority was given to the development of agriculture in order to make India self sufficient in food production. A moderate beginning was also made to industrialise India through setting up of key industries. The Second Five Year Plan laid great stress on rapid industrialisation with particular emphasis on the development of basic and heavy industries. Nehru also presided over the processes of formulation of Third Five Year Plan. In it greater stress was laid on agricultural production. There was also stress on heavy and machine building industries. These Five Year Plans, under the dynamic leadership of Nehru, laid strong foundations to

the agricultural and industrial development in India. Though planning had come under criticism from time to time, the broad fact remains that it is even now the well established means and mechanism for the social and economic transformation of India.

From the above discussions, we may conclude that the definition of democracy as referred by Nehru from time to time may be classified as: (1) Democracy defined in terms of freedom in which maximum human values can be realised (2) Democracy defined in terms of certain governmental institutions and procedures (3) Democracy defined in terms of a structure of society in which complete economic and social equality will gradually be obtained and (4) Democracy defined in terms of certain attitude and approach to problems on the part of the individual and society. In fact, proper functioning of a truely democratic State involves the application of all these four aspects.

Jawaharlal Nehru was a great visionary and he provided the fundamental ideas in the realm of economic planning for developing strong and self-reliant India with a just social order. These ideas continue to be of great relevance and will remain so in future also.